THE Comforter: OR A comfortable Treatise, wherein are contained many reasons taken out of the word, to assure the forgiuenesse of sinnes to the conscience that is troubled with the feeling thereof. Together with the temptations of Sathan to the contrarie, taken from experience: written by *Iohn Freeman*, sometime Minister of the word, in Lewes in Sussex.

LONDON,
Printed by *I. Wolfe*, and are to bee sold by *Edward White*, at the little North dore of Paules, at the signe of the Gun.
1600.

To

well
ed a
he
o se
atr
muc
who
ut?

To the Worſhipfull and his very good friends, Maiſter George Goring the elder, M. George Goring the younger his ſon, M. Harbart Pelham, M. William Morley, *M. Iohn Shurley, M. Robert Cheſter, M. Richard Shelley, M. Henry Bowyer, together with the whole congregation of Lewis:* Iohn Freeman *wiſheth grace, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Ieſus Chriſt.*

TVllie hauing intreated much of old age, knew not what fitter man to chuſe, to cõmit his writings vnto, than *Titus Pomponius Atticus*, a man well ſtriken in age. And hauing compiled a treatiſe of friendſhip, he picked out the ſame *Atticus*, a mã full of friendſhip, to ſend the ſame vnto: alwaies chuſing patrons according to the matter. Not much vnlike vnto *Luke* the Euangeliſt, who writing of the things of God, choſe out *Theophilus* (that is, a frend of God) as

a most meet man to write vnto: So I having according to my weaknes written some thing of cōfort, haue found none more meet vnto whom to dedicate my writings, then your Worships, at whose hands my selfe haue receiued, as I must stil acknowledge, exceeding much comfort. For who ought to haue more interest in comfort, than the comforters? And what fitter patrons of comfort can a man imagine to find than the authors and fathers thereof? For this cause therfore haue I made choise of your Worships, and of your brethren beloued in the Lord, as of all men most meet to commit these my writings vnto. And this the rather haued done, as on the one side in regard of my selfe, to whom there is nothing more deare, or more due, than to recompence spirituall for temporall things: that you which haue sowne temporall, might (if there be a-nie in mee) receiue from me spirituall comforts: that thus you seeing a harueſt of your corne, fruit of your labor, comforts to spring of your comfort, and mercies of your mercies; that is, the riches of the treasures of the mercies of God, opened vnto you, for the merciful

vse

vse of your riches, might not think, that either you plowed the barren sand, or sowed in a reproued field, which bringing forth nothing but thorns or briars, is therefore (as some thought) neere to the fire: so on the other side, in a more especial regard of your selues, to whom the Lord hath in a more plentiful manner opened the treasures of his hidden riches, insomuch, that you are filled therwith. I therefore haue laboured (it lieth in you, that I may say) I hope not in vaine, that you might also abound with spirituall and inward comforts. That thus you being comforted in bodie, and comforted in soule, comforted outwardly, and comforted inwardly, abounding in heauenly and earthly comforts, in the honest comforts of the flesh, and the glorious comforts of the spirit, might want nothing that might be for your sound comfort, especially for your spiritual comfort, without the which all earthly comforts are vain and fruitles. For what shall it profite a man to bee comforted in body, & afflicted in soule? To haue the comforts of the flesh, and to want the comforts of the spirit? To liue as *Dives* deliciously, and be cloa-

thed in purple, if after this life hee should be tormented with *Diues* in that flame? What should it benefit a man to eat the fat, and drinke the sweet, to be fed with the kidneies of the wheat, to eat the honie of the rocke, the calfe of the stall, the lambe of the fold, to drinke wine in bowles, to haue instruments of musicke like vnto *Dauid*, to stretch himselfe vpon his Iuorie beds, and after this life to haue fire & brimstone, storme and tempest, for to drink: & to haue his portion in that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death? What shall it profit a man to haue *Achabs* life, with *Achabs* death? *Hamans* glory, with *Hamans* shame? *Dauids* musicke, with *Saules* miserie? *Salomons* prosperitie, with *Cains* aduersitie? *Darius* his kingdomes, with *Iudas* hellish paines? Nay, how is it possible, that, that man should haue much comfort in bodie, that hath none in soule? And what sound comfort can a man take in this life, euen in the middest of his cheare, his wine, and his women, his vessels of gold, and of siluer, if he should with *Baltasher*, *Dan.* 7. see the hand of God writing against him, that fearful sentence,

Mene,

Mene, Mene, Tekel, Vphursin: that is, the Lord hath weighed thee in the ballance & hath found thee too light. And therfore ſhould hear, as the rich man in the Goſpell, that ſaying of the Lord vnto him; Thou foole, this night ſhall they, (that is the Deuils) fetch away thy ſoule from thee, & then whoſe ſhall theſe be that thou poſſeſſeſt? My labor therfore is, that with a good feaſt, you might haue a continual feaſt, that is, a good conſcience: that in your good cheare, you might be of good cheare in the Lord: that you might eat of the fatted calfe, that immaculate and paſchal lambe Ieſus Chriſt: that his bloud might be your drinke, and his bodie your meat: that his righteouſnes may be put vpon you, as that armor of light, & that wedding garment full of glorie: that you might eat that hidden Manna, and drinke thoſe waters of life, of which whoſoeuer drinketh, ſhall neuer hunger nor thirſt more: that Chriſt that knocketh at the dores, be not ſhut out of the gates: but that he may come in, and ſup with you: ſo that you eating with him, of his mirrhe, with his ſpices, of his hony comb with his honie, and drinking his wine,

with his milke, may heare those often chearings and welcomes of the Lord, being at one table with him, saying; Eat oh my friends, drinke & be drunken, oh my beloued: That so you may not see the hand writing against you vpon the wall, but fastened on the crosse: & may not heare that fearefull voice; Thou fool, this night shal they fetch away thy soule from thee: but that comfortable saying of Christ; Sonne, thy sinnes are forgiuen thee. Without the ful persuasion wherof, I do not a little maruell, how it is possible for any man to take plesure and comfort in any earthly thing For euen this one bone to gnaw vpon, might occupie them so, that they should haue little pleasure or leisure, to eat of their daintie dishes: & this one doubt of the mercie of God, might be like vnto *Damacles* sword, which hanging ouer their heads, as by a horse haire, might make them to take little pleasure in the varietie of their meats, in the points of musicke, in the beautie of their boies, in the loue of their women, in the furniture of their table, and in all other things besides. And howsoeuer the wicked are lulled asleepe in security, that they are careless,

careleſſe, and ſo come to be paſt ſorrow hauing a brawne ouer their hearts, and their conſciences ſeared with ~~a hot~~ burning iron: yet I am ſure that the elect of God, & the veſſels of mercie, deſire nothing ſo much as the aſſurance of his mercie And therefore euen their life it ſelfe is vnpleaſant, without the taſt hereof. Inſomuch, that they cannot reſt in peace, vntill by the peace of God raigning in their cõſciences, & his loue ſhed abroad into their hearts by the holy Ghoſt, they are fully aſſured, that they are waſhed, they are clenſed, they are iuſtified, in the name of Ieſus Chriſt, & by the ſpirit of their God, and ſo the free & full forgiuenes of their ſins, be fully and freely ſealed vnto their own ſoules. For they are not ignorant, how loathſome a thing ſin is in the face of God, and how fearefull a thing it is, to fall into the hands of the liuing Lord. Knowing therfore theſe things, and the feare and terrour of the Lord, I will not ceaſe, during the time of my abode, to put you in mind (by thoſe meanes that I can) of theſe things; that you may not reſt contented, as the world doth, with earthly, but may aſpire higher, ſeeking for heauenly

uenly comforts in the Lord, labouring alwaies for those things that are most excellét, according to the excellency of your place: striuing to increase in al fulnes of God, and of the holy Ghost, that you may be filled with comfort, & true ioies, and your ioy no man might take away from you. This because I could not otherwise doe, but by writing, I haue vsed the same, as that only means which the Lord hath left vnto mee, and haue, according both to your deserts, and my debt, at the last presumed (notwithstanding, that diuers reasons of no smal importance, which would be neither pleasant, nor profitable in their repeating) might haue perswaded mee to the contrary) to dedicate this my labor (which what it is, I referre to the iudgement of others) vnto your Worships, & the rest of the Churches of God about you: to whom I acknowledge my selfe a debter also: howsoeuer I acknowledge notwithstanding, my selfe not to haue receiued, from some, that experience of loue (to speak no hardlier) that I looked for. And herein, as neither the mutterings of others, the suspition of flattery, nor the opinion of pride, which might be by the ma-

malicious falſely conceiued againſt me, haue more preuailed with me than dutie: ſo I doubt not, but that ſuſpition & diſdain, vices too great to raigne in perſonages of worſhip, & profeſſors of the Goſpell of God, ſhall find no place in your very reines. For both the good opinion that my ſelfe haue conceiued, & the world receiued cōcerning your ſinceritie, will cleare you hereof, & neither ſuffer you to intertain any ſuch affectiō nor me to admit any ſuch ſuſpition. And now brethren, worſhipful, & beloued in the Lord, what remaineth, but that I ſhould bow the knees of my ſoul, to the father of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, the God of all mercie, the father of al comfort & conſolatiō, that according to the riches of his mercie, he would make you feele, and fill you with all ſpiritual comforts. That you may with glorying in the Lord look for the hope of glorie, and the appearing of the mighty God, and our ſauior Ieſus Chriſt; to whom with the father, and the holy Ghoſt, three perſons, & one God, immortall, inuiſible, & only wiſe, be all glory, power, praiſe, & dominion, now and euer, *Amen.*

Yours alwaies in the Lord,
Iohn Freeman.

The Epistle to the Reader.

AS on the one side (gentle Reader) I am not ignorant, either of the speeches of those that crie out against the comfortable opening of the promises of the grace and Gospell of God, as that which will breed (as they thinke) licentiousnesse of life: or, of the corruption of mans heart, that maketh his libertie a cloake for the flesh, and turneth the graces of God into wantonnesse: so on the other side, the afflictions of Sathan in mine owne soule, who haue beene a man that haue had good experience of infirmities, and the manifold and like temptations that I haue seene to haue been accomplished in others my brethren in the world, haue beene most profitable schoolemaisters to instruct me in the fearful and miserable estate of the desperate man. I therefore comparing

the

the daunger that might grow by the manifestation of the comfortable promises of God in Iesus Christ to the senseles, & such as are intangled in securitie, with the danger that the ignorance of the same promises of mercy might bring to them that are afflicted. The corruptions of those that corrupt the promises of God, with the corruption, or rather the rottennes of the bones that cleaueth to the that are corrupted for want of the comfort of the promises: and finding the one to be readie to perish for the abuse, the other for lack of the vse of the comforts of God: the one to perish with comfort, the other without comfort: the one to be gorged or rather choked with plenty, the other to pine away, and to starue for want of sufficiencie, and so the estate of them both to bee dangerous, the one for want, the other for wantonnes: I resolued in the end to follow the example of Phisitions, who if they find two or more diseases combined together, labor first to take away that disease, that most indaungereth the life, or commeth neerest vnto the hart. So I seeing the abuse of true comfort to be dangerous to the abusers, but the want thereof to bee deadly to the that are afflicted in conscience, I haue wholly imployed my selfe to take away this latter, with the effect thereof, which is dispaire, a disease that

strikeeth

striketh immediately against the life, both of bodie and soule: for that it lieth (as we vse to say) at the heart. And that I might the better doe this, I haue applied cordialles, that is, such things as are, or may be comfortable for the hart: wherin I haue followed the prescription of that ancient of daies, & that only wise, and Arch phisition of our soules, who giueth counsel, nay charge to comfort his people, yea, to comfort thē at the hart: which although perchaunce by reason of mine owne weakenes, or weakenes of the patient, I haue not fully attained: yet I doubt not, but that it wil appear, that I haue faithfully attempted the performance therof: applying according to the measure of the vnderstanding of God giuen vnto me, the comforts of the [illegible]nee to the broken and wounded hart: and that in such sort, as that they may not only take away dispaire, but also by the blessing of God securitie it selfe, and that libertie of sinning, that some think perchance wil insue, by the setting abroach the ful and vndoubted assurance of the forgiuenesse of sin, to them that commit sinne. For howsoeuer the knowledge of the free grace of God offered in Iesus Christ in the word of peace and truth, through the corruptiō of mans hart, that turneth (as the spider) hony into poison, may, whereas it should com-

fort

fort the conscience, corrupt the affections: whereas it should take away dispair, increase senselesnes: and so while it should cure one disease, procure another: yet such should be, and such is the power and profite thereof, in such as are ordained to eternall life, and shall be saued, as that, as it begetteth cõfort in the mourners: so obedience euen in thē that once were disobedient: it doth not only cheer, but sanctifie the conscience, and purge it from dead workes. For the same word of grace, that containeth the promises, is, not onely hidden Manna to feed vs; but immortall seed to regenerate & beget vs anew. This preaching therefore of the kingdome of God, and the riches of the mercy of God offered vnto sinners, showed in them repentance as well as faith, and newnesse of life, as well as peace in conscience. According as the holy Ghost beareth witnes, saying; dispisest thou the riches of this kindnes and patience, and long suffering, not knowing that the bountifulnesse of God leadeth thee to repentance? The end therfore of all the graces of God, giuen, offered, and receiued, is holinesse of life, and godlines of conuersation. For wee are redeemed that wee should be freed from euill, and freed vnto righteousnes. We are reconciled by the bodie of the flesh of Christ, that we should be

with-

without spot and blame, before God wee are mortified, that sin in the bodie thereof might be abandoned. We are iustified, that sinne in the guiltines thereof might bee abolished: to speake in a word, we are sanctified, that wee might be saincts by calling That man therfore that laboureth not for the perswasion of the forgiuenesse of his sinne, to this end, that he may surcease to sinne, laboureth in vaine: for hee seeketh not, and therefore attaineth not the end of his labour. He laboureth therfore as the man that looseth his hire: he striueth, as one that ouercommeth not: hee runneth as one that getteth not the garland: he trauaileth, as one that attaineth not the end of his iourney: hee iourneyeth, as one that standeth in the middest of his course. Alas brethren, what is this but to fight, as one that beateth the aire? to striue, but not lawfully? to run, but as one that getteth not the garland? to labour but in vaine? So striue therfore that you may be crowned. What a perswasion were this I beseech you to think, that therefore the Lord clensed vs, that we should bewray our selues: washed vs, that we should defile our selues: purged vs that like dogges we should returne to our vomit: toolke away our sinnes, that we should sinne still: forgaue our offences, that we should still offend him:

and

and destroyed, and crucified sinne in vs, that we should liue in sinne still? Alas, should the graces of God make vs more vngracious? his kindnesse, more vnkind? his loue more disloyall? were this to walke worthy of the Lord? Brethren, deceiue not your selues: the same death of Christ, that forgiueth your sinnes, destroyeth also your sinnes. For Christ by his owne death, & once offering vp himselfe vpon the Altar of his crosse, hath destroied the bodie as wel as the soule: the being as well as the guiltines: the power as well as the merit of sin: he died as well to sinne as for sinne: to destroy the old man, as well as to make thee a new man: as wel to make thee liue purely, as in thy life to bee purified. And therefore if thou art partaker of the death of Christ, thou must both attaine the forgiueneße of thy sin, which is one fruit, and part thereof: and also the mortification and abolishing of the bodie of thy sinne, which is the other part and fruit thereof. As therefore this is true, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ: so this also is as true, that no man is in Christ, but hee that walketh not after the flesh, but after the spirit: and againe, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. In vaine therefore dost thou persuade thy selfe to be partaker of the forgiuenes of thy sinne, if also thou

doest

doest not denie sinne, with the power thereof. For assure thy selfe that the same spirit that washeth thee, sanctifieth thee also: that clenseth thee, renueth thee, that taketh away thy sinne, destroieth sinne in thee. And learne this, that thy faith that apprehendeth the forgiuenes of sinnes, worketh alwaies by loue, which is the keeping of the commandements of the Lord, and the fulfilling of the law. If faith therefore purifie thy heart from sinne, thou wilt cease to sinne. For the heart being cleane, the hands will not be vncleane: a good tree will not bring forth euill fruit: a sweet fountaine, soure water: a good man, an euill life: a man clensed from sinne, a life stained, and corrupted with sinne. I adde hereunto that there is no forgiuenes of sin, where there is not a true repentance for sinne: and therefore the Lord tieth alwaies his turning from his wrath, to our turning from our sins: and telleth vs plainely, that except we doe repent, we shall all perish. So that except thou leaue sinne, thou art left in thy sinne: except thou forgoe sin, God will not forgiue sinne: except thou forsake thine offences, thou forsakest Gods mercie. How canst thou looke that the Lord should forbeare his punishments, when thou wilt not forbear thy sinne? and how dost thou looke, that the Lord should repent him

of

of his wrath, when thou wilt not repent thee of thine offences? Moreouer, know this, if thou meane not to surcease to sinne, that the promises of grace, and benefites of Christ appertaines not vnto thee. For as there are two parts of the word of God, I meane the law, & the Gospell: so there are two kind of men, to whome these two parts especially appertaine. The law belongeth to them that are contemners of the law, and to the disobedient, to the wicked, and sinners, to the vngodly, and prophane, to the killers of their father, & of their mother, to manslayers, to whoremongers, to buggerers, to theeues and lyers, to periured persons, and if there be any thing else that be contrary vnto holesome doctrine. But the gospell with the promises of grace appertaineth vnto them that are heauy loden, that mourn, and are oppressed with their sinnes, which being truly humbled, are by the law as by a schoolmaister brought vnto, & so into Christ: in whom whosoeuer is, hee is, not vnder the law, but vnder grace. If therefore thou be not in some regard of the nnmber of this latter sort, assure thy selfe, that the promises of mercie appertaine not vnto thee. And therefore, if thou being an obstinate person, appropriate them vnto thy selfe, thou art but an Ammonite, that incrochest vpon the possession

ſeſsion of Iſraell: an Eſau, *that by force vſurpeſt the inheritance of* Iacob: *an* Achab, *that oppreſſeſt* Naboth *with his vineyard: a theefe, that takeſt the goods of other men: a dogge, that eateſt vp the childrens bread. The curſe of the law, together with the threatnings thereof, are thoſe things that are proper vnto thee. Firſt therefore cleanſe thy hands thou hypocrite, and thy heart thou double minded man, and then come and talke with the Lord, and then though thy ſinnes be as the skarlet, the Lord will make them as the ſnow, though they bee as the purple, the Lord will make them as the wooll, then ſhalt thou finde comfort in the comforts of the Lord, and be comforted indeed. It lieth therefore in thee, that both that which thou readeſt may be cõfortable, and that, that which I haue written may be profitable. The framing of thy ſelfe to the obedience of faith, together with the right vſe of theſe, and other the comforts of the Lord, may both ſtop the mouths of thoſe that inueigh againſt ouermuch comfort, as that which will lay open, as they ſay, a gap to all ſinne and Epicuriſme: and alſo cauſe me not to repent my ſelfe of my labour, when I ſhall ſee thee bettered, and the weake comforted: thee caſt down, and the humble lifted vp: thee to be full of obedience, and the mourners full*

of

The first Chapter.

Wherein it is declared, that there is liuely hope of com-*fort left vnto all them that mourne vnder the burden of their sinnes.*

AS there is no estate, either in bodie or soule, more dangerous, or more miserable, then that which is desperat: so there is no speech, either more lamentable, or lesse true, then that which commeth therefrom: which (in effect) is, either the same that came from *Caine*, that crieth out, that his sins are greater then can be forgiuē, or that which came from *Ieremie*, inferred as it were vpon the former, that concludeth, that there is no hope left for him in the Lord. Wherein, albeit they speak according to the sight of their sins, that seem to be monstrous, & therefore vnpardonable; or according to the feeling of the

wrath of God, which seemeth vnremoueable, & therfore intollerable: yet not according to the very truth it selfe. For it is not to be denied, but that the bloud of Christ, which is that price wherwith they were redeemed frō their sins, far excelleth the value of all sinne whatsoeuer in the sight of God: & that the holyghost, which is that sanctifying spirit, that washeth vs from all our sins, being God, & therfore of infinit power, is able to clense vs, and wipe away, as all tears from our eies, so all sins from our soule: & to make those offences, that are as the skarlet (that is, the most bloudy, as the skarlet is most red) to be like vnto the snow: and them that are as the purple, to be like vnto the wooll. For the Lord is rich in mercie to all them that call vpon him faithfully, and abundant in kindnes. And therfore as the prophet *Dauid* cōcluderh: *There is mercy with him that hee may bee feared: and with the Lord there is plenteous redemption.* It followeth therefore, that howsoeuer it appeareth not vnto that soule: yet there is hope of comfort left vnto him, & so to all them that come vnto the Father, by Iesus Christ our Lord. For euen God [illegible]

ther is called by the ſpirit, the God of al comfort, and the Father of all mercy & conſolation: and Ieſus Chriſt is that fountaine of gardens (as the ſpouſe calleth him) in whom all fulnes, yea euen of the comforts of God, dwelleth without meaſure: and the ſpirit of God is called by Chriſt himſelf the comforter. So that we being by the ſpirit, which is the comforter, lead, through Chriſt the fountaine of the gardens of the comforts of the Lord, vnto God the father, the father of al comfort and conſolation, how is it poſſible that we ſhould want either comfort or ſpirituall conſolation? Aske them that haue been heretofore as thy ſelfe afflicted, & therfore, for the preſent, as thy ſelfe perſuaded: aske them I ſay, whether (though they ſpake according to their preſent feeling) yet, whether they ſpake according to the words of truth, yea, or no. They can tell thee, and that, both out of the word, and by experience, that although ſorrow lodge with thee for a night, yet joy ſhal come in the morning: that they are bleſſed that now weepe, for they rejoice: that they are bleſſed that mourne, for they ſhall be comforted: that a bro-

ken & contrite hart, is a ſacrifice ſweet ſmelling vnto God the Father, and acceptable in Ieſus Chriſt our Lord: and that both this thy ſorrow, which is for thy ſins, if it be ſo great, as that it breed repentance, and ſo little, as that it breed not deſpaire, is that godly ſorrow, which is a notable grace of God, and a ſingular vertue (created in thee by the ſpirit) conſiſting betweene two extremes, deſpaire on the one ſide, and ſenſeleſneſſe on the other ſide: and alſo, that euen this thine (as it ſeemeth) ſeruile fear, is that ſpirit of bondage to feare, which is mentioned in the eight to the Romans. That is, that fruit of the ſpirit of God, wrought in thee, to bring thee to the true feare of God, which is, as the holie Ghoſt beareth witneſſe, the verie fountain and offſpring of wiſdome. And that therefore this ſorrow, and feare, are but thoſe foundations or ground workes, vpon the which, the ſpirit of God (whoſe worke-manſhip now thou art in Ieſus Chriſt) will build the other graces of God, euen ſanctification (that is, righteouſnes and true holines, the fruit whereof, as the Apoſtle *Iames* telleth vs, is ſown in peace) & ſpirituall comfort, with the

fulnes

fulnes of God & of the holy ghost, which being once felt after thy sorrow, will make thee sing a Psalme of thankesgiuing vnto the Lord, and make thee to reioice with ioy vnspeakeable. For the end of godly sorrow, is ioy in the spirit, and comfort in the holyghost. After *Peters* teares insued the fulnes of the holy Ghost. *Dauid* that in one place complaineth, that his sinnes are continually before his face, and gone ouer his head, as a burden too heauie for him to beare: in another Psalme addresseth himselfe to sing of the mercie and iustice of the Lord: and to extoll his long patience, & louing kindnesse. The Iewes, that by the preaching of *Peter* were pricked in conscience, were afterward by the same *Peter*, baptised to the remissiō of their sins. The Iayler that had drawne out his sword to kill himselfe withall, was after comforted by *Paule*, and reioiced, that he with his whole houshold beleeued in God. And to conclude, what one man hath there euer bin, that rightly sorowed for his sins, that hath not found his sorrow to bee turned into ioy, and his mourning into comfort? Comfort thy selfe therefore with their comforts, and

ſo make thy ſelfe partaker of their comforts. Knowing this, that the Lord, that hath giuen thee wine to glad thy heart, oile to make thee haue a cheerful countenance, ſweet flowers to delight thy ſenees, muſicke to refreſh thy mind, generally to ſpeake in a word, manifold comforts for thy bodie: is, as rich in the comforts of the ſpirit, which he will as richly in his time appointed, ſhed into thy heart by the holy Ghoſt: the knowledge wherof may be a good ſtep to the attaining of that ſpirituall comfort, that thou deſireſt and thirſteſt after. For to a ſicke man, it is euen health it ſelfe to know that his diſeaſe is curable, & that there is remedie ynough for the ſame. But as it is not ynough to know that there is a ſalue for his ſore, except he know the confection, and the ſame be applied: ſo in this diſeaſe of the ſoule, I meane deſpaire, it is not ſufficient to know that there is a remedie, except the ſame be applied accordingly. The one, which is to applie the remedie, I commit to the worke of the grace of God, and to thine owne care, and deſire of peace, and eaſe. The other, which is to deſcribe the comfort, I wil (by the grace of

of God) labour in. And herein I will describe those particulars only, which my selfe know to haue ben profitable vnto others, that haue been, as thou art, afflicted.

The 2 Chapter.

In the first part whereof are set downe the expresse promises of God, concerning the free forgiuenesse of sinnes: and in the latter is declared: first, that the same promises of mercie are deliuered vnto vs in the word of God, then that they are bound by his oath: thirdly, that they are also bound by his indenture of couenants: and lastly, that they are confirmed by two visible signs and tokens, in stead of wonders: to wit, Baptisme, and the Supper of the Lord.

The first Section.

Irst therefore I wil (that thou mayest not relie vpon the vncertainetie of man, but the vnchangeable truth of God) set thee downe those expresse promises of God concerning the free forgiuenesse of thy sinnes, that the

Scriptures most euidently, & plentifully for the most part, in euery one of the Prophets, afoord. As namely in the 18 of *Ezechiel*, where the Lord expressely promiseth, that if the wicked wil return from his sinnes that hee hath committed, and keepe al his statutes, and do the thing that is lawfull and right: that he shall surely liue, and shall not die: and that all his transgressions that he hath committed, shal not be mentioned vnto him: but in his righteousnesse that he hath done, he shall liue. And againe in his 33 Chapter, the Lord by the mouth of the same Prophet promiseth, that if the wicked turn from his sinne, none of his sinnes that he hath committed, shall euermore be mentioned vnto him. And this is that also which is promised by the Lord (by the mouth of his Prophet *Ieremie* in his 33 chap.) to all them that repent, who promiseth, that he will clense them from all their iniquities, whereby they sinned against him, yea, that he wil pardon al their iniquities, whereby they haue sinned against him, and wherby they haue rebelled against him. And this is yet further confirmed by the mouth of the Prophet *Esay*, who in his

43 chapter, bringeth in the Lord himselfe speaking after the same maner, and saying: *I, euen I am he, that putteth away thine iniquitie, for mine owne sake, and will not remember thy sins any more.* And again in his 44 chapter he sayth: *I haue put away thy transgressions like a cloud, and thy sinnes as a mist: turne vnto mee, for I haue redeemed thee.* Infinite are those promises of the Lord that are liuely, and in euery one of the Prophets (euen as many as haue written from *Moses*, and from thence forward) and that oftentimes expressed. All which it shal be needlesse to repeate. These few, in stead of all the rest, may suffice to shew vnto thee, that the Lord hath passed his promise, to passe by thy sinnes, and to forgiue thine offences and transgressions. The consideration whereof, may be a strong and infallible comfort vnto thy conscience. Knowing that the Lord, that hath promised, is able, by reason of his power (to whom it onely appertaineth to forgiue sinnes) and is willing, by reason of his promise, to performe it. For we are not to set the Lord before our eyes, as those vaine men of the world, that promise more then they are able to accomplish:

or as those deceitfull men, which being in the ballance, are lighter than vanitie itselfe, who make a face, but haue no heart, make an offer, but haue no purpose to performe that which they promise. For who hath euer put his trust in the Lord, and went away confounded? Who hath euer relied vpon the Lord, and the Lord lied vpon him? Who hath euer depended vpon him, & did not by experience find, that it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any confidence in man? ye a, that it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any confidence in Princes? With whom did the Lord euer make a couenant, & broke it? To whom did the Lord euer make a promise, and fulfilled it not? Call to mind all the promises of God made in former times, & in the ages that are past; and see if euer he failed in any one iote of his promises. He promised to giue vnto *Abraham* a son, and by him a seed, that should be multiplied as the starres, & as the sand by the sea shore. How hard a matter was this, and in reason impossible to be performed? For if we consider either the bodie of *Abraham*, it was dead, he being almost an hundred yeares old: or the

dead

deadnes of *Saraes* womb, with whom it ceased to be after the maner of women, we shal see the accomplishing h:reof to be in the iudgement & opinion of flesh and bloud, impossible. And therefore howsoeuer *Abraham* being strong in faith, staggered not through vnbeleefe at the promises of God, but laughed for ioy: yet *Sara* laughed them to scorn, as things not to be hoped for: and therby might throgh her vnbeliefe, haue deprived her selfe of the blessing of God: yet the Lord would rather work miracles, & alter the course of nature, then he would not accomplish that promised seed, that he promised vnto *Abraham*. Insomuch, that neither *Abrahams* dead bodie, nor *Saraes* dead wombe, no nor *Saraes* dead faith, (for so in this regard I may cal it) could make the promise of God of none effect. Again, he promised vnto the same *Abraham*, to giue vnto his seed after him the land of *Canaan* for their possession. Now do but consider with thy selfe, how many lets there might haue seemed, to haue hindered this that was promised. *Abrahã* himself had no possession therin at all (as *Stephen* mentioneth) no not the bredth of a foot: his seed consisted

onely

onely in one *Isack*. Those that should be borne of him, must be in bondage foure hundred yeares to a strange nation, and there they must be euilly intreated. The Ægyptians were more in number then they were, and therfore able by violence to keepe them in bondage still. *Pharaoes* hart was hardened, so that he would not let them goe. The redde sea might haue stopped their passage: the long & barren wildernesse might haue consumed them, and beene their graue: the firie Serpents might haue deuoured them: the Amalakites might haue ouercome them in battel: hunger and thirst might haue pined them away: their rebellion against *Moses*, their murmuring against *Aaron* their idolatrie against God, their whoredome with the daughters of *Moab*, might haue razed them out of the face of the earth. The towns of the land of *Canaan* were mightie, & walled vp to the heauens. The people thereof were of the sonnes of *Anack*, euen giants, and of a tall stature. The people of the Iewes were weake, vnarmed, not exercised in the warres, and that which is more, full of vnbeleefe, and of a hard heart. All these might haue mooued the Lord to

haue

haue broken his promise, if any thing posible could procure him thereunto: but none of all these, neither the hardnesse of *Pharaoes* heart, nor the power of the Ægyptians, nor the depth of the sea, nor the barrennesse of the wildernesse, nor the sting of the Serpents, nor the force of the Amalakites, nor the strength of the citties, nor the might of the gyants, no nor the sinnes of the seed of *Abraham*, could make the Lord to chaunge his promise, or alter that which he had spoken with his lips. Moreouer the Lord promised to send his sonne into the world, made of a woman, of the seed of *Abraham*, and of the stocke of *Dauid*, and by him to redeem mankind. Now how many things might haue mooued the Lord to haue broken his promise? God himselfe must make himselfe void and emptie, as the Apostle speaketh: he must take vpō him the shape of a seruant, and bee made the creature: he must be a man that should haue good experience of infirmities, & bee counted so vile, that all his people should hide their faces from him: he must be subiect to cold, heat, hunger, thirst, nakednesse, and pouertie: he

must

must be tempted by Sathan, despised of men, tormented of God: he must be whipped and scorned, yea, he must be hanged vpon the crosse, and die a most shamefull death; he must be made sin, & the curse of God for vs: he must descend into hell, and haue the portion of the reprobate and damned soule, for to redeeme vs. All these might haue moued the father to haue pitied, and so to haue spared his only sonne: especially, they might haue moued God not so to haue abased himselfe, but to haue continued in his owne glorie and blessednes. But most especially might that praier, that Christ the sonne of God made to his father in the garden, where he intreated him in the bitternes of his soule, to remoue if it were possible that cup away from him, that is, that he might not indure those torments, and suffer that death, together with the contempt and infidelitie of the Iewes, haue caused the father, either for his sonnes request, or the peoples desert to haue repēted him, & so to haue changed his promise with his purpose. But neither the regard of Gods owne glorie, in his son, nor the abasing, nor the abusing, nor the misery,

nor

nor the torments, nor the curse, nor the death, no nor the damnation (as it were) I meane the portion of the damned, allotted vnto his son, nor yet his intreatie, nor mans infidelity, could bring that to passe. What should I stand in repeating of the promise of God made to *Noah*, which was no more to destroy the world with water: although no doubt the sins since the flood, haue ouerpassed all that euer went before. The promise made to *Dauid*, which was, that he would giue him the kingdome of Israel, which he brought to passe: notwithstanding the might, the malice, & the rage of *Saule*. The promise that he made to the Iewes concerning their returne out of the captiuity of Babilon: which when they saw effected, they were as it were one that dreamed, and their mouth was filled with laughter. What shall I need to repeat euery one? when it is manifest that neuer a one euer failed or came to naught. Let these suffice to assure thee, that, that Lord whose promises haue bin euer, euen as himselfe, immutable, and vnchangeable, notwithstanding all lets and hinderances: will not now begin with thee, either by reason of the mon-

strous-

ſtrouſnes, or multitude, or manner, of thy ſinnes, or weakeneſſe of thy faith, to breake his promiſes, and to retaine thy ſinnes, which he promiſed to forgiue. I do not denie but that thy ſinnes might be monſtrous, and many, yea, and malicious alſo: and therefore they might ſeeme to be great reaſons to ſtay the accompliſhment of theſe forenamed promiſes: but if thou compare them with thoſe mountains which the Lord ouerpaſſed, and thoſe lets, which yet could not let the performãce of his promiſes, they will be little or none at all. Why ſhould that God that neuer was found to haue broken his promiſe, be, by thee accounted a truce-breaker. And how canſt thou thinke, that that God that will reuenge with flaming fire, and eternall reprobation, from the face of his glorie, and brightnes of his preſence, all deceitfulneſſe in man, ſuffer the ſame to remaine, and dwell in his owne perſon.

Adde hereunto, that theſe promiſes of mercy are deliuered vnto thee in the word of God: the truth wherof is ſuch, as that, as Chriſt teſtifieth, heauen & earth ſhall paſſe, but not one iot nor title of his word. And for this cauſe hath the

ſpirit

ſpirit giuen vnto the word moſt glorious titles, calling it ſometime the immortal ſeed of God: becauſe it neuer dieth; ſometimes incorruptible, becauſe it neuer fadeth: ſometime the guiles milke, becauſe it neuer deceiueth: ſometime the word of truth: becauſe it neuer lyeth. Sometime hee compareth it to ſiluer, that hath been tried ſeuen times in the furnace, that is without all droſſe: ſometime to gold and precious ſtones, built vpon the foundation Ieſus Chriſt, which when the fire commeth, that ſhall trie euery mans worke, ſhall abide, and ſhall not periſh. Sometimes he compareth it with the continuance and firmeneſſe of the heauens, and the earth, and preferreth it before all things whatſoeuer in the eternitie, truth, and conſtancie thereof. And therfore doth not the Prophet *Dauid* ſpeake in vaine, or vntruly of the word of God, when hee frameth, as it were a whole booke, I meane the hundreth and nineteene Pſalme, for the moſt part in the extolling and magnifiing of the word of God, where he is not afraid to ſay, and that according to the feeling of the ſpirit, the ſame ſpirit, bearing him record, that the word of God

is

is true, yea, that it is the truth it selfe. For this cause is *Esay* bold to preach that which the Lord commaundeth him to publish, concerning the truth of this his way, saying, all flesh is grasse, and all the beautie thereof, as the flower of the field: the grasse withereth, and the flower fadeth away, but the word of God indureth for euer. And no maruaile, for it commeth not from the chaungeable braine of mortal and corruptible man, but from the spirit of truth & life, which is not the authour of lies, but the father of light, and of eternitie. So that now these promises being contained and made part of the word of God, are also immortall, incorruptible, guiles, true, yea the truth it selfe: firmer then the heauens, and the earth, more pure then fined gold: and vnchaungeable, as the holy Ghost is, who is the author therof. Either therfore thou must embrace and beleeue thē, or else thou must account that to be immortal that perisheth, that which is guiles, to be deceitfull: that which is more sure then the heauens, & the earth, to be moueable, that which is truth it selfe to be a lie. Thou must denie the word of God to be the word of

God:

God: and in flat and expresse terms, tell the Lord and the holy Ghost, that he lieth. For God himselfe expressly, & his spirit auoucheth vnto thee the forgiuenesse of thy sinne, in his owne words. If therfore thou gainesaiest, either secretly in thy heart, or openly in thy mouth, thou giuest God the lie: for thou denyest his words to be true. And therefore is it that *Iohn* in his first Epistle telleth vs, that he that receiueth not the witnes and testimonie of the Lord, hath made God a lier. And now do but thinke what villanie thou offerest vnto God, & what blasphemy it is to his person, to account God to be a lier: and do but thinke with thy selfe, whether it be more likely, that either thou or God should lie. Consider with thy selfe that thou maiest erre, lie, and be deceiued: for that is proper vnto man. But giue vnto God his glorie, & beleeue in him, as thou protestest that thou doest euen in the entrance of the Creed, or else thou shalt be worse than the deuils: for the deuils beleeue and tremble, as the Apostle *Iames* beareth witnesse. Let therfore God be true, and euery man a lier: and therefore assure thy selfe, that this is a lie in thee, to

say

ſay in thy heart, that the Lord will not forgiue thee thy ſinnes, and thine offences. For the Lord who lieth not, with whō there is no change, nor ſhadow of change, hath promiſed, and ſaid, that he will forgiue thy ſins and thy transgreſſions. And this Lord (as the Prophet *Dauid* telleth thee) will not alter that which hee hath ſpoken with his lips, neither will he lie againſt his truth.

I would willingly know of thee, whether thou beleeueſt that which thou ſaieſt that thou doeſt beleeue, if thou doeſt not beleeue it, and yet ſaieſt that thou doeſt beleeue it, thou proueſt thy ſelfe to be a lier; and then what queſtion is it, but that thou maieſt lie, when thou ſaieſt in thy heart, that thy ſins are greater then that they can be forgiuen: but if thou acknowledge thy ſelf to beleeue that indeed, which thou ſaieſt thou doeſt beleeue: how canſt thou ſay thy Creed, wherin thou makeſt a confeſsion of thy faith, profeſſeſt that thou beleeueſt the holy Catholike Church, and the forgiueneſſe of thy ſinnes, except withall thou fully beleeue and bee perſuaded that thy ſinnes are forgiuen: either therfore thou muſt denie thy faith

&

& ſhow thy ſelf to be a Chriſtiã, or thou muſt on the one ſide acknowledge thy ſelfe, and God himſelfe to be a lier: or elſe on the other ſide, thou muſt aſſure and fully perſwade thy ſelfe, that thy ſinnes are forgiuen thee, by Ieſus Chriſt our Lord.

I doubt not, but that thou eaſily beleeueſt the threatnings of God: and that, that is true, which Chriſt ſayeth, that except thou repent, thou ſhalt bee damned. And that alſo which *Paule* teſtifieth, who ſaith, that no adulterer, no idolater, no theefe, no murderer, nor ſuch like, ſhall enter into the kingdome of God, or Ieſus Chriſt. If thou beleeueſt the threatnings, why beleeueſt thou not the promiſes? are they not written al in one word? by one ſpirit? by one God? did not the ſame God, that ſaid, except thou repent, thou ſhalt be damned: and againe, that no adulterer, idolater, theefe, nor murderer, ſhould enter into the kingdome of God, or Chriſt, ſay alſo, that at what time ſoeuer a ſinner repenteth him of his ſinne from the bottome of his hart, that the Lord will blot out all his offences out of his remembrance? or what is

the

the Lord true, when he threatneth, and a lier when he promiseth? doest thou count him iust in the one, and false in the other? will he, thinkest thou, execute his iudgements, & will he not performe his promises? are not his promises part of his word, as well as his threatnings? And then why doest thou beleeue one part of the word more than the other? are they not all alike the word of God? is not the one the word of God, as much as the other? If one part be true, then all is true: if one be false, then all is false. If thou beleeue one part, beleeue also the other: if thou beleeue not the one, beleeue not the other: but both in his time & place: if thou beleue not his promises, despaire not for his threatnings.

The second Section.

I adde further, that the Lord considering our weaknesse, and how hardly we are brought to beleeue the stablenes of his promise, and this grace of God in Christ bestowed vpon vs: contenteth not himself thus barely to haue promised, but goeth farther, & bindeth himselfe with an oath, to the performance, as of his promises in generall, so of the forgiuenesse of sins, which is one speci-

all

all thereof, as plainely appeareth in the 22 Chapter of Genesis, where the Lord to shew vnto *Abraham*, and vnto the heires of the promise, the stablenesse of his counsel as the spirit beareth witnes, swore by himselfe, (then whom there is none greater to sweare by) that because *Abraham* had not spared his only sonne, therefore the Lord would not spare his only sonne: or rather as there it followeth, that he would giue him a seed, wherein all the nations of the Earth should be blessed: where we see that the Lord sweareth not only to send into the world his Sonne: but to giue the blessing vnto all nations, in, and with him. Now by the blessing he meaneth not onely after this life eternal life, and saluation: but euẽ in this life, the forgiuenesse of our sinnes, according as *Dauid* describeth this blessing, saying, blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiuen, and whose sins are couered. Blessed is he to whom the Lord imputeth no sinne. So that it is manifest, that the blessing that the Lord swore to giue vnto all nations, in one especiall regard, concerneth the forgiuenes of our sins: and that therfore the Lord hath sworne

to

to forgiue vs our sinnes, in & through Iesus Christ our Lord. But yet that we might more reuerence the truth of this his promise, he sweareth the secōd time to accomplish them. And that in the 54 chapter of the Prophesie of *Esay*, where the Lord speaketh after this maner, saying. This thing is vnto me as the waters of *Noah*. For as I haue sworne that the waters shal no more couer the whole earth: so haue I sworn, that I will not bee angrie with thee, nor rebuke thee: though these hilles should fall downe, and these mountaines be moued, yet my kindnesse shall not depart from thee, nor my league be remoued. In which words, as the lord bindeth himself by outward sacraments: so by an absolute oath, to the continuance of his loue to his-ward: and also to the accomplishing and fulfilling of the league of his peace, which is that league, or couenant before mentioned, made with *Abraham*, or rather that which is expressed in the 31 of *Jeremie*: one speciall clause, or article whereof, as in the same place appeareth, that the Lord will forgiue our iniquities, and thinke neuer any more of our offences: so that hereby

it appeareth euidently, that the Lord hath sworn by himselfe, that God hath sworne by God, and that not once, but twice, euen againe and againe, to perform his promise made vnto vs concerning the free forgiuenes of all our sins and our offences. This therfore is that oath of the Lord, which when thou art brought to doubt of the forgiuenes of thy sinnes, thou shouldest set before thine eies, still hauing recourse therevnto, to strengthē thy faith in the promises of God. And that after the example of the Prophets, Apostles, and holy men of God: as *Zacharie* in the first of *Luke*, who remembreth (to assure himselfe of the mercy of God shewed to his fathers, his deliuerance from the hands of all his spirituall enemies, as sin, hell, and the deuill, and the remission of sins afterward mentioned) the oath which he sware to our forefather *Abrahā*, which was, that he would grant vnto vs, that we being deliuered out of the hands of our enemies, should serue him without feare in righteousnes and true holines all the daies of our life. And also as the Apostle to the Hebrews and 6 chapter, who to persuade them to bee followers of

thē that through faith & patience inherited the promises: alledged that oath, with the which the Lord bound himself to *Abraham*, and the heires of the promises, to performe, & fulfill his promises, that thus thou hauing the same oth that they had to confirme thy faith, shouldest (as they) haue strong consolation: hauing thy refuge to lay hold vpō that hope of mercie that is set before thee, and so tarying patiently, enioy the promises of mercie: which therefore with a ful persuasion of faith, thou maist looke for, because the Lord hath tied himselfe with an oth to accomplish the same. For an oath, as the forementioned Apostle testifieth, is with the Lord an immutable thing, that is, such a thing as cannot bee chaunged. The heauens as the Prophet *Dauid* saith, shall waxe old, and as a garment will the Lord chaunge them. The Sunne shall loose her light, and the Moone shall be turned into blood, before the great and fearefull day of the Lord. The hils shall remoone, the foundations of the earth shall shake. The earth it selfe shall perish with the works that are therein: but the promises of the Lord established

by

by his oath, are immortall, and cannot be changed. Vntill therefore thou ſee the earth conſumed, and the elements melt with feruent heat: nay, though, & when, thou ſeeſt theſe things diſſolued, yet know, that the oath of the Lord is exceeding conſtant, & that there is no end, nor change thereof. For it is immutable. Nay, as the ſame Apoſtle farther in the ſame place addeth, it is ſuch a thing as it is impoſsible, that the Lord ſhould lie therein. So that that Lord, to whom al things els are poſsible, who can by his word at one inſtant, create al things, make things that are ſeene, of thoſe things that do not appeare: giue life vnto the dead: and againe with a word conſume all things whatſoeuer: That God, I ſay, to whom all things els are poſsible, euen to him this one thing is impoſsible: which is to lie againſt his oath. And therefore if it ſhall come into thy mind, that it may be that the Lord will not do as he promiſeth, know for a certaintie that it may not, no, nor cannot be, that the Lord ſhould breake his promiſe, or his oath. It is impoſsible for him, he cannot doe it. It is ſuch a thing as is immutable, wherin it is im-

posible that the Lord should lie. The oath therfore of the Lord should bring an end to thy fear, and to thy doubting. Especially, considering, that an oth for confirmation, is among men an end of al controuersie. For euen in the suspition of the wiues honestie, an oath must cleare the woman, and satisfie the husbands iealousie. In the matter of contract or hire, if the partie that borrowed his neighbors beast sweare, that it perished not through his default, the lender ought, (and that by the law of God) to giue credite vnto him, and to rest satisfied. How much more then, not man, but the Lord, hauing sworne to forgiue thy sinnes, oughtest thou to rest satisfied. So that now euen in reason, in conscience, in equitie, & in law, the forgiuenes of thy sinnes ought to be a matter out of all doubt, and controuersie. If thou receiuest the witnesse of men, the witnesse of God is greater. And yet euen with mẽ, if they haue not cast of al (I say not feare of God, but) humanitie, there is such a religion of an oath, as that rather then they wil forswear themselues, they wil sustaine any inconuenience. Examples whereof we may haue plentie, not only

onely from daily experience: but euen out of the testimonie of the word of truth. *Herod* swore to giue to that dancing damsell, euen whatsoeuer she asked, yea, though it were the one halfe of his kingdome: she demanded the head of *Iohn Baptist*. The scripture testifieth, that albeit *Herod* feared the people, and so a ciuil insurrection, that might haue cost him his life, & kingdome also: yet for his oaths sake he sent his executioners (I will not now dispute how lawfully) to cut off his head.

Iephtha a Iudge of Israell (if he returned with victory) vowed, to sacrifice vnto the Lord, the first liuing thing that he met withall, after his returne. The Lord so disposed of the matter, that his own daughter was the first, that offered her selfe vnto him. Neither the regard of nature, nor of the life of his own daughter, nor of his sinne against God, (although perchance he knew not that hee sinned therein) no nor any thing else, could make him to break his (though, but vnaduised) vow. But what shall I speake of these men, with whom a shew of religion might seem thus to haue preuailed: when it is manifest, that there haue ben

amongst the heathen, many such, especially one *Marcus Attilius Regulus*, that would, for their oaths sake, returne againe from their own friends & countrey, where they might haue rested in peace and safetie, into their enemies hands: notwithstanding that they knew that there were most exquisit and picked torments there prouided for them? How many haue we known with vs, who being constrained by their oath, haue laid open their owne shame, and secrecie, to their greatest and vttermost perill? If such be the reuerence of an oath taken but by God, what thinke we will be the reward thereof, when it is taken of God? If man whose heart is aboue al things most deceitfull, will not be moued to breake his oath: doe we thinke, that the Lord, who is the righteous judge of the whole earth, can be moued to forsweare himselfe? The Lord will not suffer that mã that sweareth to his neighbour, and disappointeth him, to dwell within his tabernacle, nor to rest vpon his holy hill: and then is it likely that he will suffer the sinne it selfe, for the which he reprooueth the man, to haue place in his owne person? God for-

forbid, that we ſhould ſo conceiue of the Lord, accounting him to be leſſe conſtant, then inconſtant man. If it were poſsible that ſuch an imagination ſhould creep into our heads, as that we ſhould think that the Lord would lie: yet far be it from vs, that we ſhould think that the Lord would forſwear himſelfe. Euen this one word therefore, which is, that the Lord hath ſworne to forgiue vs our ſins: ſhould ſtrike into our hearts ſuch a ful aſſurance therof, as that we ſhould reſt in peace, be fully ſatisfied and reſolued therin: no longer wauering as the vnconſtant & doubtfull minded man: but rather reioice, be comforted, & glorie in the Lord, euen as my ſelfe haue known many of the elect of God to haue done: who, althogh before they wer horribly afraid, and diſquieted in their own ſoules: yet ſo ſoone as they heard this once, that God hath ſworn to forgiue their ſins, haue been exceedingly comforted, and refreſhed therwith, & haue preſently ſhaken & caſt off all fear, together with their doubting: ſo that they neither feared nor doubted any longer.

The third Section.

But yet further, if we meaſuring the

Lord by our owne foot, shall not giue credit, either to his word, or to his oth: but shall, for better assurance, require writings, and as we say, euidences thereof: behold herein the loue of God also, who hath by his indenture of couenãts, bound himselfe to forgiue our sinnes, & all our offences. The couenants (for the more assurance) you may see drawn as it were by the Lords owne hand, in the 31 chapter of the prophesie of *Ieremy*, & set downe very authentically, as in the very and right forme of an indenture of couenants, in this manner following. *This is the couenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those daies, saith the Lord, I will put my lawes in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I wil be their God, & they shal be my people. And they shal teach no more euery man his neighbour, saying; Know the Lord: for they shall all know me from the least of them, vnto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I wil forgiue their iniquities, and wil remember their sinnes no more.* This is the Indenture of the couenants of the Lord, drawn euen by the finger of the Lord, the holie Ghost. Wherein, in the very entrance thereof, thou maiest see: First, the very

stile

ſtile of an Indenture, contained in theſe words: *This is the couenant*, and ſo forth. Secondly, the parties themſelues mentioned, betweene whom this couenant is made: the Lord of the one ſide, & the houſe of Iſrael, that is, the elect, & houſhold of God, which is the Church Catholike, on the other ſide, contained in theſe words: *That I will make with the houſe of Iſrael.* Thirdly, the time, the date, and as it were the terme of thoſe couenants, when they ſhould enter and begin; and that was eſpecially at the time of the death of Chriſt, cõpriſed in theſe words; *After thoſe daies.* Fourthly, the articles and couenants themſelues are ſet down, and ſpecified: and they are three principally. The firſt is, that he will inſtruct them inwardly in their ſoules by his ſpirit: which *ſhould write his lawes in their hearts.* The ſecond is, that *hee would bee their God, and they ſhould be his people.* The third is, that hee *would forgiue their iniquitie, & remẽber their offences no more.* So that here we ſee the expreſſe Indenture of the Lord: by the which he hath couenanted, and graunted to forgiue vs our ſinnes, and our tranſgreſſions. And becauſe that in Indentures it is not y-

nough to haue but one, which is as the first draught: but a paire, that they may be giuen interchangeably: therfore the Lord hath by the hand of the Apostle to the *Hebrues*, in the eight chapter, drawn the counterpane of the former, word for word, as it is in the former, after this maner: which I will also set downe, that thou maiest confer them together, saying: *This is the couenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those daies, saith the Lord. I wil put my lawes in their inward parts, and write thē in their harts. And I wil be their God: & they shal be my people. And they shal not teach euery mā his neighbour, saying: Know the Lord: for all shall know mee, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful vnto their vnrighteousnes, and I will remember their sins & their iniquities no more.* In which words thou seest the very counterpane of the former Indenture of the Lords couenāts almost word for word. So that now thou hast a pair of these Indentures of couenants, to warrant thee forgiuenes of thy sins. And least thou shouldst lose, or lay vp that Indenture that is with thee at thy heeles, and so should not haue it to shew when need requireth, behold the

kind-

kindnes of God to thee ward: who hath taken the paine to coppie out the sum of the couenãts, in the tenth to the *Hebrues:* in these words following. *This is the couenant that I wil make vnto them, after those daies, saith the Lord. I wil put my lawes in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them. And their sins and iniquities wil I remember no more.* So that thou seest how faithfully the Lord, (as one that ment not to deale deceitfully with thee) hath dealt in this behalfe. What can he do more? Thou wilt not take his word nor his oath, he hath entred into couenants, & bound himselfe by his Indenture, to performe his couenants. And this Indenture he hath caused to be made interchangeably, & so a paire of them to be drawn: one for the principall, on the behalfe of the Lord: the other for euer to remain with thee. And that which is more, he hath giuen withall a coppie thereof, if thou shouldest forget where to find the Indenture itselfe. And least thou shouldst take some exception against the hand, or the scriuener that wrote the same: the Lord, as before I said, drew the couenants, & Indenture itselfe, with his own hand and

finger, which is the holy Ghost, who is with the father and the son, God, blessed for euermore. As plainely appeareth by the witnesse of the holy Ghost himselfe, who saith, that no Scripture came of any priuate motion, but holy men wrote, as they were moued, and guided by the holy Ghost. And therfore Christ, *Peter*, and *Paule*, with all the rest of the Apostles, when they spake of the writings of the Prophets, and their witnes, called it the witnesse & writings of the holy Ghost. So that these Indentures were drawne and written by the holy Ghost, which is the hand and finger of God. So that thou hast the couenants of God drawne also with the Lords owne hand, for thy better and full assurance. And least that this Indenture should want any thing of his ful vertue, power, and strength: the Lord hath added his Sacraments: which are fitly by *Paule*, in the fourth to the Romanes (speaking of circumcision, which was a Sacrament to *Abraham*, & the same that Baptisme is in the particular, or that the Supper of the Lord is in the generall, vnto vs) called the seals of the couenant of God. So that the Lord hauing added his Sacra-

ments

ments to his couenants, hath therin added his seale to his Indentures. For his Sacraments are his seales. The matter wherof consisteth not as doe the seales of kings and princes of the earth, either of yellow, or greene, or red wax: but of the red bloud, of the immaculat & vnspotted Lambe, the Son of God, Iesus Christ; which is visibly exhibited in the Sacrament of the Supper of the Lord. For which cause the Lord himself, and the Apostle *Paul* in the 11 of the first to the Corin. calleth the cup in the Lords supper, the bloud of the newcouenāt: for that this new couenāt before set down, is ratified, established, cōfirmed, & therwith sealed as it were with a seal. Wherin also least thou shouldst take some exception against this seale, as if it were either counterfait, or by stealth added & affixed thervnto: thou art to vnderstād, first that it is the Lords broad seale. For euen as in the queens broad seale, there is imprinted, ingrauen, & so represented the person of her maiestie: so in this Sacrament of the Lords supper, which is his seale, is imprinted, ingrauen, and so represented the very body & bloud, and so the very and liuely person of the

sonne

ſon of God, Ieſus Chriſt, the bread representing his bodie, & the wine repreſenting his bloud: & that in ſuch a liuely maner & forme, as that Chriſt himſelfe calleth the bread his body, and the wine his bloud it ſelfe. So that the perſon of the Queen is not ſo liuely repreſented in her broad ſeale, as the perſon of the Son of God is repreſented in his broad ſeale. Secondly, thou art to know, that therein alſo is his ſeale of armes ingrauen. For therin is ſhewed forth the arms of Chriſt nailed to the croſſe (which is the cogniſance of a true Chriſtian) his bodie broken, and his bloud ſhed, for the remiſſion of thy ſinnes. And this is in ſuch a liuely maner, by the breaking of the bread, which is his bodie, and the ſhedding of the wine, which is his bloud: ſhewed forth vnto the eies of our bodie: as that we there behold viſibly as in a mirror, Chriſt crucified before our eies: his body broken, and his bloud ſhed, for the forgiueneſſe of our ſins. So that our eies may there ſee the worke of our redemption fulfilled, & ſo withal his ſeale of armes, his armes being ſpread vpon the croſſe, and his bodie wounded for our transgreſsions. So that euen as the

broad

broad ſeale of England, hath on the one ſide the perſon of the Prince, and on the other ſide the armes of the land ingrauen: ſo hath this ſeale of God (fixed to his indenture of couenants) the perſon of the Lord on the one ſide, & his arms on the other ſide, liuely, and euidently imprinted. Thirdly, thou muſt cõſider, that this is his ſeale, which is vſually affixed in ſuch caſes, & to ſuch writings. For it hath been alwaies the vſe of the Lord, to ſeale theſe and ſuch like couenants of ſpirituall graces, by the ſhedding of bloud. As may appear in the 15 of *Geneſis*, where the Lord confirming and ſealing his couenant of the land of *Canaan*, (which repreſented that heauẽly Ieruſalem vnto them) which he promiſed unto *Abraham*, and his ſeed: cauſed him to ſlay a calfe, a goat, & a ram, of three years of age, and to cut them a ſunder, according to the vſe of thoſe nations. So the Lord in the 17 of *Geneſis*, being to enter into a new couenant with *Abraham*, concerning the child of promiſe, ſealed the ſame with circumciſion, which was a Sacrament of bloud. But moſt liuely of all this appeareth in the 24 of *Exodus*, where the Lord being to

eſta-

eſtabliſh his firſt, which is that old couenant with the Iewes, in the hand of *Moſes*, the mediator of the old couenant, cauſed diuers beaſts to be ſacrificed, & their blouds to be taken in two veſſels, according to the two perſons: that is, God, and the Iewes, with whom the couenant was to be made: and the bloud to be ſprinkled vpon the pillers, erected for that purpoſe, the one repreſenting the Lord, the other, the people: which being accordingly performed by *Moſes*: he added, ſaying; *This is the bloud of that couenant, which the Lord hath made with you.* That is to ſay, this bloud is that bloud, by the which the Lord ſealeth vnto you the couenant, that before hee couenanted with you. Thus as the Lord ſealed his old couenants with the bloud of bullocks, goats, and rammes, which were but tipes of Chriſt, the body of all the ſhadowes: So he ſealed, according to his vſuall manner, this his Indenture of the new couenant in like maner, with bloud: and that with the bloud of his onely begotten ſonne. And the reaſon why the Lord after this manner ſealed his couenants, was this: for that vnto those people, a wil, or a teſtament, and a

couenant, were all of one nature. And therfore the Apostle to the Hebrues, & the spirit of God in diuers places beside, comprehendeth them both vnder one name or word, which is διαθήκη: which signifieth either a will or testament, & also a couenant. Now we know that a testament or will, and so a couenant is neuer ratified vntill the death of the testator: that is the man that made the will: but he being once dead, the will cannot be altered, but must stand vnchangeably. For a man that is dead, cannot alter his will or couenant. The Lord therefore being immortall, and therefore could not die: that he might by the same vnchangeable manner, ratifie and confirme his promises, caused certaine beasts, which represented his bodie, as tipes and figures of himselfe, to be slain for him, and in his stead: vntil that Christ himselfe, who was aboue all things, God blessed for euermore, should in his owne person, by his own death, & the shedding of his most precious bloud, establish and confirme this his owne good will and testament, that is, this new couenant afore mentioned. And therby seale sinnes, and purge iniquitie,

quitie,& ſo bring in euerlaſting peace: as the Angell ſpeaketh to *Daniel*, in his ninth chapter. Chriſt therefore by his death and bloudſhedding, hath eſtabliſhed this new couenant of the forgiuenes of our ſinnes, in ſuch ſort, as that it cannot be changed. For the man being dead, as the Apoſtle ſheweth to the Hebrues, the wil is not to be altered. God therfore that he might aſſure vs, that he would not alter this his good wil & couenant of grace, laid downe his owne life: and ſo by his death, which was by the ſhedding of his bloud, he hath ſo ſealed this his couenant, as that it cannot be broken, nor diſanulled. And as hereby, he hath inuincibly confirmed his couenants: ſo hath he herein, vſed no other ſeale to ſeale thē withall, then that which hath been alwaies vſuall in the like caſes For as al his former couenants (eſpecially the old couenāt) were confirmed by bloud: ſo likewiſe is this his Indenture ſealed, and ſo ratified by the bloud of Ieſus Chriſt, which is therfore, as before I ſaid, very fitly called the bloud of the new couenant: for that therby, this couenant is ratified, ſealed, & vnchangeably confirmed. Thus then

thou

thou haſt the Lords Indenture, written with his owne hand, and ſealed with his owne bloud: which is that broad ſeale, and that ſeale of Armes, that is vſually affixed vnto ſuch couenants & eſcripts. And herein, leaſt thou ſhouldeſt thinke that this ſeale were a counterfait, or added by ſtealth: thou art to know, that the inſtitution of this ſeale, or Sacrament, came not from man, but frõ God himſelfe, who the ſame night that he was betraied, ordained the ſame, & cõmaunded it to be ioined, and added vnto the word of grace, and the preaching of the forgiueneſſe of ſinnes, as infinite proofes might be alledged, if it were a matter of any doubt. The truth therfore and the lawfulnes of the ſeale, is a matter out of all doubt and controuerſie. What is there els then, that thou requireſt for the confirmation of this his, or rather thine euidence? Deſireſt thou witneſſe? Behold the teſtimonie of all the Prophets and Apoſtles, who were the pen-men and writers hereof: who therfore ought to ſtand for double witneſſes. Behold the witnes of the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Ghoſt: the witnes of all the faithful of God, who with

one

one mouth, as afterward in part shall appear do confesse the same. But what shalt thou need to bee carefull hereof, when thou maiest bee assured, that the Lord, if thou shew him his own writings and scriptures, will neuer denie his own hand. Hauing therefore this Indenture and writing of the Lords owne hand, follow herein the example of that godly king *Ezekiah*: who, whē he had receiued letters from *Zenacherib*, that were blasphemous against God, entred into the temple of God, vnfolded them, and laid them open before God, to mooue the Lord, the rather thereby to bow downe his eares, and to heare his requests, that he powred out before him. So thou hauing receiued, not from mā, but from God himselfe, writings & euidences, not of wrath, but of his free mercie, and the forgiuenesse of thy sins; enter into thy chāber, take these euidences & couenants of the Lord with thee, vnfold them, spread them, lay them open, and read them before the face of God. And withall, after the example of *Ezekiah*, poure forth thy praiers & supplications before the Lord: and say vnto him, as followeth.

Oh

OH most merciful God, the Father of all comfort and consolation: thou that art that strong God, that forgiuest offences, and passest by iniquitie in the remnant of thy possession: thou that preparest the heart of the poor, & then openest thine eare, to hearken therunto. Incline, O Lord, thine eare, & heare: open, O Lord, thine eies, and see: behold O Lord, the word of thine owne lips, & the writings of thine owne hand. Of a truth Lord, I haue sinned, and done exceeding wickedly in thy sight. I acknowledge it, & confesse it before the throne of thy grace. But thou, O Lord, according to the riches of thy mercy and louing kindnes, hast promised to forgiue mine offences. Yea, the more to shew the stablenes of thy counsell, thou hast tied thy selfe by an oath therunto. And that which is more, thou hast couenanted and indented with me, by this thy couenant, to passe by mine iniquities, & to remember my sinnes no more. And now Lord, regard, I beseech thee, thy gracious and free mercie: the oath of thy holinesse: and behold the words of thine owne mouth, the workes, and the couenants of thine owne hands, sealed

with

with thine own most pretious bloud,& confirmed by thy death vpon the crosse, wherin thou hast promised to forgiue all my sinnes,and my transgressions. Be it vnto me thy seruant, I beseech thee, according to thy free promise, and according to thy gracious couenant. Oh let me feele, I pray thee,the accomplishing hereof in my owne soule. And as thou hast written this couenant in thy word with thine own finger,and sealed the same with thy bloud: So gracious Father,vouchsafe to write it in my hart by thy spirit, and to seale it vnto my conscience,by the powerful applying of the same thy bloud thereunto: that it may wash me from all my sins and my transgressions,and so create in me, that peace of God that passeth all vnderstãding. Gracious God,thy free offer maketh me freely to offer these my requests vnto thy name, and with a full confidence of hope to haue accesse vnto the throne of thy grace: knowing that thou,O Lord,that hast promised, art able,& wilt, according to this thy scripture,& the writing of thine own hands, performe it. This course if thou shalt take,it is not to be doubted, but that,as

thy

thy hart shal find faith, so thy soule shal receiue comfort, in, and from the liuing Lord: feeling according to this couenant of the Lord, thy selfe to be washed, clensed, and iustified, in the name of Iesu Christ, and by the spirit of our God.

The fourth Section.

But yet further, if with *Gedeon* we shal desire a token: or with *Ezekiah*, a signe to confirme our faith. Behold, the Lord sitteth not in a rainbow in the clouds, as he did to *Noah*: he maketh not the sunne to go tenne degrees backward, as he did for *Ezekiah*: he maketh not the fleece to be wet in the drie floure, nor drie in the wet dew, as he did for *Gedeon*: but he giueth thee, being but one man, euen two signes: nay, more then signes, euen two Sacraments: the one of Baptisme, the other, of the Lords supper: both of them being visible signs, to confirm vnto thee, the inuisible grace of the free mercy of God in Iesus Christ. And therefore did the Lord himselfe in the seuenteenth of *Genesis*, when he first instituted the Sacramēt of Circumcision, call it a signe, saying vnto *Abraham*, that it should be a sign of the couenant that was betweene himselfe, and them:

that

that is, that it ſhould be that ſigne, that the Lord would giue vnto him, to aſſure and to approue vnto him the fulfilling and accompliſhing of his couenant. Whereupon the Apoſtle *Paule* in the fourth to the Romans, ſpeaking of the ſame Sacrament, calleth it in like manner a ſigne: ſaying, that *Abraham* receiued the ſigne of Circumciſion, that it might ſeale the righteouſneſſe of faith, which was in his vncircumciſion. That is, that he receiued circumciſion, which was an outward and an euident ſign, to confirme vnto him his free iuſtification by faith. Thus as one of the Iewiſh Sacraments is called a ſigne: ſo likewiſe was the other, which was the Paſchall lambe, or Paſſeouer: as plainely appeareth in the twelfth of *Exodus*: where it is ſaid of the bloud of the Paſchall lambe (which repreſented the bloud of Ieſus Chriſt, the vnſpotted & vndefiled lamb) that it ſhould be vnto them for a ſigne vpon their houſes, that the Lord, when he deſtroyed the Ægyptians, their, and his enemies, would paſſe ouer them, ſo that they ſhould liue in peace and reſt when their enemies were conſumed. So that hereby it plainely appeareth, that

both the Iewish Sacraments, were nor not only seales of the couenants, but also giuen for signs & tokens vnto them: which shuld be continually before their eyes, to confirme vnto them the graces of God, in Iesus Christ. Whereupon it followeth, that as their Sacramēts were vnto them: so are our Sacraments, that is the Supper of the Lord, & Baptisme, giuen for signs vnto vs, to confirme, as all other the graces of God: so our free forgiuenes and pardon for al our offences. For the same is Baptisme vnto vs, that Circumcision was vnto them; as plainely appeareth in the second to the Colossians, the eleuenth & twelfth verses. And the same is the Supper of the Lord vnto vs, that was the Paschall lambe vnto them, as infinite places, and the generall consent of all men approueth. The visible signe only, according to the time, being altered into another, which is far more significant, and more liuely to signifie: and so to confirme vnto vs this inward grace of God, of which now we speake. And therefore is a Sacrament very fitly, according to this their vse, defined by *Augustine*, to be a visible signe of an inuisible grace. As

therefore the signe of the Raine-bow in the clouds, cõfirmeth vnto vs, that promise of God, which he made with *Noah*: that is, that hee would destroy no more the whole earth with waters: as the returne of the Sunne tenne degrees backward, was a signe vnto *Ezekias*, that hee should be recouered out of that disease. As the fleece of *Gedeon*, being wet in the drie, and drie in the wet, was vnto him a signe, that hee should ouercome his enemies: so is the water in Baptisme, wherwith we were washed, a signe and token vnto vs, that we should be washed from all our sinnes, and our offences. So likewise is the breaking of the bread, & the pouring out of the wine, in the Supper of the Lord, another as euident a signe, that by the death of Iesus Christ, and by the shedding of his bloud, we are purged from all our sins. According to the saying of *Iohn* in his first Epistle: who saith, that the bloud of Christ purgeth vs from all our offences. And again in the Reuelation, Christ saith, he hath washed vs by his bloud from all our offences. And againe in the fift to the Ephesians the Apostle *Paul* speaking of Baptisme saith, that Christ sanctified the Church

and

and purged it, by the lauacre of water in the word. So that now, when thou seest other, or remembrest that thy selfe was washed with water in Baptisme: And again, when thou seest the body of Christ to be broken in the Supper of the Lord, and his bloud to be poured out, and giuen to thee: thou art to consider with thy selfe, that these are two signs & tokens, which are shewed, and giuen to thee of the Lord, fully to assure and perswade thy conscience, that thy sins are forgiuen thee: and that thou art washed, that thou art sanctified, and that thou art iustified, by the bloud of Iesus Christ, and by the spirit of our God. So that now, doest thou seeke with the Scribes and Pharisies a signe? Behold the Lord hath giuē vnto thee, not one, but two tokens, in stead of other miracles and wonders: euen two visible signs of this inuisible grace, euen Sacraments to confirm thy faith, and yet doubtest thou? The incredulous Iewes said vnto Christ, shew vs a signe, and we will beleeue thee. See the Lord sheweth thee two, & yet wilt thou not beleeue him? One raine-bow was enough for *Noah*: one fleece for *Gedeon*: the sunne once to go back for *Ezekiah*:

and will it not suffice thee, to haue not once, but often, one sign giuen: nay, to haue not one, but two signs, to confirm, nay, to performe vnto thee, the things that are promised. For the other were but signs confirming: but these are more, euen signs confirming and conferring, (*signa confirmantia, & conferentia.*) For that which is signified, is giuen, conferred, & so ioined together with the sign it selfe. And therfore the Lord, to teach this soundly vnto vs, calleth the outward signe, by the very name of the thing it self that is signified: calling circumcision, the couenant: the Paschall lamb, the Passeouer: the water in Baptisme, the fountain of regeneration: the bread in the Supper of the Lord, the bodie of Christ: and the wine the very bloud of Christ: to teach vs, that these signs are not as the rain-bow is, or the going backward of the sun, or the fleece of *Gedeon*, which were bare signes that serued onely to confirme vs: but that they are more: euen such, as alwaies haue the things themselues that are promised, and signified, annexed, knit, and ioined vnto them, in regard of the Lord. And therefore, as verily, yea, and euen

then,

then, when the water washeth thy bodie in Baptisme: & euen as verily, yea, and euen then, when the bread is broken, & the wine poured out in the supper of the Lord, and giuen vnto thee: euen so verily, yea and euen then, if thou be rightly prepared, doth the spirit of God wash thee, by the bloud of Iesus Christ, from all thy sinnes and thine offences. For these signs are not only significant, but effectuall also: they doe not only confirme, but giue that which they should confirme thee in. I meane not, that the Sacrament *ex opere operato*, that is, by the very bare worke thereof, giueth this grace: but that the Lord giueth with & by these signs, his forepromised graces: euen the forgiuenes of thy sinnes. And so as he giueth the signe to confirme thy faith: so the thing signified to comfort thy conscience, although perchance thou presently feel not the power thereof. So that sith the Lord is so gracious, as by two continuall visible signes, which he will haue often shewed vnto thee, euen as it were wonders, more precious, and of greater power and force, then any signs or tokens, in heauen aboue, or in the earth beneath, sith the Lord I say,

is so gracious, as by two such signes to confirme vnto thee, the forgiuenesse of thy sinnes: nay, to giue thee forgiuenes of thy sinnes: with what reason canst thou doubt thereof? For hee giueth it vnto thee verily, and indeed, if thou wilt receiue it, together with the signe it selfe: and then why doubtest thou whether thou shalt haue it, when alreadie thou hast it? What could the Lord doe more, or thou require more then this? Thou desirest forgiuenesse of thy sinnes, and assurance thereof: the Lord promiseth, nay sweareth, nay indenteth to giue it. Hee sheweth and giueth thee two signes, to assure thee thereof: and that which is more, with the signes he offereth the thing it selfe. And this is the first reason, taken from the promises of God, confirmed by so many vndoubted meanes.

The

The 3 Chapter.

Wherin the forgiuenesse of sinnes is proued, by the consideration of Gods mercy, which is one part of his essence, substance, and nature.

The first Section.

THe second reason, to proue vnto vs the forgiuenes of our sins, is taken from the consideration of the essence, and the substance, and the natures of the Lord, which are part of the essence, the substance, and the being of God, yea God himselfe. For whatsoeuer is in God, is God: and in him there is no accident, nor qualitie, but whatsoeuer is in him, is of his essence, and his substance. And therefore his nature, as his mercie, patience, iustice, and such like, are of his essence, and are euen very God. His mercie therefore is very God, and God is mercie it selfe. He therefore that denyeth mercie vnto God, (which is to forgiue our sinnes) denieth God to bee God, denieth one speciall nature, which

the spirit of God ascribeth vnto God, & that very often in the Scriptures, and the written word of God. As namely in the second of *Joel*, where the Prophet speaketh thus of the Lord, saying: *The Lord your God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, & of great kindnes, and such a one as repenteth him of the euill.* And again in the 34 of *Exodus*, the Lord himselfe proclaimeth his name before *Moses*, and all the children of Israel, saying, and crying: *The Lord, the Lord, strong, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, & abundant in goodnes, & truth, reseruing mercy for thousands, forgiuing iniquitie, sin, and transgression*, & so forth, as there foloweth more at large: & againe in the 103 Psalme, the Prophet *Dauid* saith, that *the Lord is full of compassion and mercie, slow to anger, and of great kindnesse.* Many and manifest are those prooses, that prooue the Lord to be by name & nature merciful. Now we know that the nature and worke of mercie, is to respect, to pittie, and to help our miserie. For euen as the eie hath colours, the toong tasts, the eare the sounds, the nose the sauours, for his obiect to be busied in, to respect, and worke vpon: so the mercy of God, hath mans misery, &

sinne,

ſinne, the principall cauſe therof, as his obiect, to worke vpon, to cure, and to remedie: inſomuch, as if there were no miſerie, there could be no vſe of Gods mercie. And therefore the Lord ſhut vp all vnder vnbeleeſe, as *Paul* teacheth in his epiſtle to the Romãs, that he might haue mercie vpon all: and ſo by that means made a way for his mercy, which elſe could not ſo euidently haue manifeſted it ſelfe vnto our vnderſtanding. Herein therfore appeared the depth of the riches, both of the wiſedome and knowledge of God (ſo much admired of *Paul* in the ſame place) in that he would rather haue man fall, then his mercie faile: he would rather haue man ceaſe to be righteous, then himſelfe ceaſe to be merciſull: he would rather haue man ceaſe to ſhew obedience, then himſelfe ceaſe to ſhew mercie: hee would that man ſhould ſin, that he might appeare to be a gracious God, in the forgiuing of his ſinne. True it is, that there appeared a notable euidence of the mercy of God in framing this beautiſull world, out of that deformed *Chaos*, and rude earth in the beginning, in making the Sun to rule the day, and the Moone to gouern

the night, as the Prophet at large deſcribeth in the 136 Pſalme. But the Lord not contented therewith, as a ſufficient manifeſtation of his mercie, thought it not ynough to create, except he did recreate man; to giue life, except he redeemed life; to giue life to them that were not, except he gaue life to them that were dead; to make man righteous of nothing, except he made him righteous of a ſinner; to giue him righteouſnes, except he did alſo forgiue him his vnrighteouſneſſe, his diſobedience, and ſinne committed againſt his glorious maieſtie. So that it being the propertie of mercie, to reſpect miſerie, and God being rich in mercie, cuē the God of all mercie, & the father of all comfort and conſolation, whoſe mercie reacheth vnto the heauens, and his faithfulnes vnto the clouds; we may no leſſe truly, then boldly inferre, that as it is naturall for the fire to giue heat, or the ſun to giue light: ſo is it natural for God to forgiue thy ſinnes, and thy offences. And as the fire giueth thee heat, & is not moued, as the ſun giueth thee light, and is not vexed, and troubled therewith, ſith it is his nature ſo to do: ſo the Lord forgi-

ueth

ueth thee thy sinnes, and is not (as Sathan would persuade thy conscience) either troubled, or vexed, or greeued, or vnwilling therewith: and why? because it is his nature so to doe. And therefore as man doth those things cheerfully & willingly, which he doth naturally: so God doth forgiue our sinnes, and that without any trouble or molestation to himselfe, because his heart driueth him therunto, as the Prophet speaketh. Thou comest to the fire for heat, and it is not painefull for the same to giue it: thou comest to the sunne for light, and it is no offence for it to affoord it: thou comest to God for mercie for thy sin, and it is not troublous for the Lord to yeeld it. No, he taketh a singular delight in forgiuing thy sinnes: as *Micah* in his last chapter plainly sheweth. Where he saith; *Who is so strong a God as thou art? forgiuing sin, and passing by iniquitie, in the remnant of thy possession, which keepeth not his anger for euer; because he is delighted with mercie.* And the Prophet *Dauid* in his 147 psalm telleth vs plainly, that the Lord deligheth in them that feare him, and come to him for mercy. So that the spirit speaketh euidently, that the Lord delighteth

both

both in them that sue to him for mercy, and also in shewing of mercy, and therfore in forgiuing our offences. And no maruaile: for first his mercie being one part of himselfe, he must needs delight in the vse therof. For as man desireth & delighteth in the vse of the parts of his bodie, of his toong to speak, his eies to see, his ears to heare, his hands to feele, his feet to walk withall, insomuch, that the contrarie therunto is painefull: as for to haue his toong tied, his eies closed, his eares stopped, his hands manacled, his feet chained, or fettered: so is it a delight for the Lord to vse the parts of himself, as of his iustice, to the iudgement of the obstinat: so of his mercie, to the forgiuenes of the sin of the humble, and the mourners: and the contrarie thereunto, which is to be debarred of the exercise and vse of his mercie, is rather troublesome and paineful vnto the Lord, then is the forgiuenes of our sinnes. For the forgiuenes of sinnes, is the vse, and exercise of Gods mercie, which is one part of God himselfe, yea God himselfe. For as this is true, God is loue: so this also is true, God is mercie: and therefore God must needs delight

in

in his being, euen in his being mercie, & in being merciful to his elect, though miserable, both men, and sinners. And in this first regard, it is manifest, that God taketh a singular delight in the forgiuenes of our sins. Secondly, & lastly, the forgiuenes of our sins, turneth to the praise of the glorie of his grace. For the Saints that tast and trie the mercy of the Lord, sing praise in the memoriall & remembrance thereof, as *Dauid* willeth them: yea, and hauing felt the mercie of God, in the forgiuenes of their offences with *Dauid*, they acknowledge to the praise of the glorie of God, that the Lord is very kind and merciful also, and that in God compassion doth plentifully flow. And with the elect of God, they fall downe before the throne of his grace, & giue honor, and glory, and power, and praise vnto God, that hath redeemed them from this wicked world, & their offences, and made them kings and priests vnto the Lord, a holy nation, & a royal priesthood. And as Schollers accept pardon from their Tutors, seruants from their maisters, sons from their parents, subiects frō their princes, with all humble thanks: so the elect, accept with all

thanks

thanks vnto the Lord, the cup of their ſaluation, the pardõ for their ſins, bowing the knees of their ſoules vnto the God of all mercie, and the father of all comfort, falling down vpon their faces, & giuing thanks to him that liueth for euer and euer, that waſheth them by his bloud from all their ſinnes and transgreſſions. And therefore ſith it turneth vnto the aduãcing of the glory of God, vnto the magnifying of his mercie, and is alſo of the eſſence & nature of God to forgiue our ſinnes: we may be aſſured, that as the Lord hath a ſingular delight therin, ſo a ſpeciall readines therevnto. For euen men (we ſee by experience) willingly do thoſe things, wherein they are delighted. We may therfore hereout conclude, that as the fire cannot chuſe but burn, ſith it is his nature: ſo God cannot chuſe but forgiue vs our offences, ſith it is naturall vnto him. He is mercifull, for he is mercie it ſelfe, and that eſpecially vnto miſerable ſinners: for where there is no miſerie, there can be no mercie.

The ſecond Section.

The mercie of the Lord ſtretcheth it ſelfe euen to the beaſtes of the field.

Thou

Thou Lord, ſaith the Prophet *Dauid* in his 30 Pſalme, doeſt ſaue both man and beaſt. And againe in his 147 Pſalme, the Lord, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, is good to all, & his mercies are ouer all his works. Doth the Lord ſhew mercie to the beaſts of the field? and will hee not extend the ſame to man, created according to his own image? is he gracious vnto ſenceleſſe creatures? and will he not be gracious vnto reaſonable creatures? Doth his mercie ſtretch it ſelfe to the baſer workes of his hands? and ſhall it thinkeſt thou be ſhut vp from thee, the moſt excellēt workmanſhip of al other whatſoeuer creatures vpon the earth?

Thou haſt had experience of the manifold mercies of God towards thy body. He gaue thee life, whē thou wert not, he brought thee vp vnto mans eſtate, whē yet thou wert but weak: thou were ſicke, and he healed thee, weake, and he ſtrengthened thee, hungry, and he fed thee, thirſtie, and hee ſatisfied thee, naked, & he cloathed thee, ſorrowfull, and he comforted thee, in miſery, and he releeued thee: he is the God of thy body, and therfore good vnto thy body: ſo is hee the father of ſpirits, and God of all

mercie,

mercie, and therfore will be fauourable vnto thy ſpirit, I meane vnto thy ſoule, as wel as vnto thy bodie. For the father of all mercie, is the father of ſpirits, as well as he is the God of thy bodie. And therfore thou maieſt look for the ſame fauor in healing the infirmities, euen the ſinnes of thy ſoule, that thou foundeſt in curing the ſicknes and weaknes of thy bodie.

The Lord is mereifull euen towards his enemies, euen to the froward and vngodly man, he maketh his rain to fall vpon the good, and the bad, his ſun to ſhine vpon the iuſt and the vniuſt. Hee giueth foode euen vnto the godleſſe and vnrighteous man, euen to him that ſtubbornly oppoſeth himſelf againſt his maieſtie. If the Lord be ſo mercifull to his enemies, how merciful will he be to his friends? If to the reprobates, what mercie wil he ſhew to his elect? If to his ſlaues, what to his ſons? If to the veſſels of wrath, what to the veſſels of mercie? If to the froward, what to the meeke? If to the obſtinate, what mercie will he ſhew to the mourners? eſpecially ſith all the promiſes of God are made, either only, or eſpecially to them, that are fil-

led

led with ſorrow for their ſinnes. Bleſſed are they that mourne, for they ſhall be comforted. *Math.* 7. Bleſſed are they that weepe, for they ſhall laugh and reioice. *Luke* 6. And againe, to whom ſhall I look, ſaith the Lord, *Eſ.* 66. euen to him that is poor, that is broken in ſpirit and that trembleth at my words: and for the moſt part, all other the promiſes of God are made to the ſicke, to the ſinners, to the loſt, and to them that are heauy loden. Thou therfore that mourneſt, that trembleſt, & art greeued with thy ſinnes, maieſt after a more eſpeciall manner, aſſure thy ſelfe of Gods mercy, to releeue thy miſerie, euen the miſerie of thy ſoule, and thy ſinne.

Thou thy ſelfe ſheweſt mercie, euen vnto thy brother: thy ſeruant offendeth thee, and thou pardoneſt him: thy ſon diſhonoreth thee, and thou forbeareſt him: thy neighbor deſpiſeth thee, and thou forgiueſt him: yea, thy dog, and thy beaſt reſiſteth thee, yea, diſpleaſeth thee, and yet thou paſſeſt by it: is there more mercie in thee to thy neighbour, then is in thy God to thee? Art thou more kind to thy ſeruant, nay, to thy dog, then God is vnto thee? Canſt, and

doeſt

doest thou forgiue thy brother that offendeth thee, and will not God forgiue thee, offending his maiestie? Is there more mercie in man, then in God? Nay, is not this mercy in man, an image of the mercie of God, according to the which wee were framed. So that thou maiest behold the mercie of God towards thee, in the vse of thy mercie towards thy brother. Dooth not Christ plainly teach vs, that if we forgiue men that trespasse against vs, our heauenly Father will and shall forgiue vs our trespasses, as we forgiue thé that trespasse against vs? If therfore thou being greeued for thy sinnes, desirest to be assured that they are forgiuen, reioice when thou seest any man offend thee. Knowing, that thereby the Lord hath offered vnto thee an outward sign, and an assured argument, to prooue the forgiuenes of thy sinnes, vnto thy owne soule, and conscience. For if thou forgiuest thy brother, thy God also wil forgiue thee. For the Lord will contend and striue with thee in the forgiuenesse of sinnes: as whether thou shalt forgiue more offences to thy brother, or thy God vnto thee, and the Lord will ouercome and

goe

go before thee herein. For as he is infinit: so his mercie is endlesse. And as in a line, one point is continued to another: so in the mercies of God, the end of one, is the beginning of a new mercie from the Lord. It is therefore a very profitable way to feele the mercie of the Lord, παραζηλωσει, euen to prouoke the Lord to mercie towards our selues, by shewing mercie towards our brethren. For if we shall contend with the Lord in shewing mercie, namely, whether we shal shew more mercie to our brethren, or our God to vs, we shall be sure to be ouercome, and the Lord will get the victorie. And herein it is both glorious and profitable, and also comfortable for vs to be ouercome of the Lord: for his victorie is our triumph.

The wicked, and those that are lulled asleepe in the deapth of their owne sins, can confesse & acknowledge the truth of the mercie of the Lord, and can say, though in the flatterie of their owne soules, that God is mercifull, that God is mercifull. Can the skorners to whom the mercie of the Lord doth not appertaine, acknowledge the mercie of God, and the forgiuenes of their sins? And

canst

canst not thou, to whō all the promises of mercie doe belong, apply the same vnto thy selfe, and acknowledge with thy mouth, and beleeue with thy hart, that thy sins are forgiuen? Why shouldest not thou doe that fruitfully, which those men doe vnprofitably? Why not thou do that truly, which they do falsely? Why not thou do that comfortably, which they doe but flatteringly? I mitate the Bee, that sucketh honie out of that flour, out of the which the spider draweth poison. This is the first reason, that is taken from the mercie of God, which is naturall vnto him.

The

The 4 Chapter.

Wherein the forgiuenesse of sins is proued by the consideration of Gods iustice (which is another nature essentiall vnto him) by three especiall waies. First, by reason that the Lord hath promised to forgiue our sins, in regard whereof it standeth with his iustice to performe the same. Secondly, for that he hath alreadie punished Iesus Christ for our offences, and therefore cannot in iustice punish them in vs also. And lastly, because he hath alreadie punished our persons in Christ, and so cannot iustly punish vs againe.

THe second kind of reason is taken frõ the iustice of God, which is another nature essential to the Lord. From which also, as wel as frõ his mercie, there ariseth a necessarie reason to persuade vnto vs the forgiuenes of our sins, and that many waies.

The first Section.

First, for that the Lord hath promised to forgiue our sins, as before hath ben suffi-

ſufficiently proued: in regard whereof it ſtandeth with his iuſtice to performe the ſame. And that alſo in ſuch a neceſſitie, as that either he muſt forgiue vs our offences, according to his word, or els we muſt account him vnfaithfull in the breach of his promiſes, or elſe, which were horrible to think or iudge him to be, an hypocrite, or a diſſembler, in pretending one thing, and intending another: or elſe inconſtant in altering that which he hath ſpoken with his lips, he muſt be thoght (which were monſtrous) to be vniuſt, in lying againſt his truth. For iniuſtice dooth not conſiſt only in workes, but in words alſo, and it appertaineth vnto a iuſt man, to deale not only vprightly, but truly alſo. This iuſtice therefore of the Lord, either muſt flatly be denied, which were to denie God to be God, or els the remiſſion of our ſins muſt of neceſſitie be both inforced, and inferred. And therefore *Iohn* in his firſt Epiſtle, and firſt chapter, vrgeth this ſpeciall reaſon, ſaying; If we confes our ſinnes, God is faithfull, and iuſt, to forgiue our ſins, and to purge vs from all iniquitie. And *Dauid* in his 103 Pſalme in effect vſeth the ſame reaſon, to per-

ſwade

swade the forgiuenes of our sinnes, saying; The mercie of the Lord endureth from age to age: towards them that fear him, and his iustice (or as some translate it, his righteousnes) towards childrens children. And againe in his 116 Psalm, the Prophet gathereth the sauing health of the Lord, not only from his mercie, but also from his iustice: and therfore he ioineth them both together, to approoue the same, saying; The Lord is gracious & iust, our God I say is merciful, the Lord that saueth the simple, whé I am brought low, sheweth his saluation vnto me. Many other are those places, that vrge the same reason, to confirme vnto vs the forgiuenes of our sinnes, and therefore in this first respect we may boldly and truly proue vnto our selues, the remission of our sinnes from the iustice of God: for it is a iust thing with the Lord, according to his promises, to forgiue vs our offences.

The second Section.

Secondly, the Lord hath already punished Iesus Christ for our offences, & therefore cannot in iustice punish them in vs also. For as *Esay* testifieth in his 53 chapter, he was punished for our sins,

he

he was broken for our iniquitie: we all erred as a sheepe, euery one of vs turned to his own way, and the Lord made the punishment of vs all to fall vpon him. What could be spoken more plainly for the proofe hereof, then this which the Prophet here by the spirit of God deliuereth vnto vs? For we offended, & Christ was punished, the seruāt displeased his Lord, & the father beat his son for it: dealing herein with vs, as he did with *Dauid*. *Dauid* cōmitted adulterie, and the child that was borne in adulterie, died for it. *Dauid* caused his subiects to be numbred, and the people in great multitudes were slaine therfore. Or rather as Tutors vnto Princes childrē, deale with their pupils, if they commit a fault, their seruants are beaten: but herein is the difference: there the seruant is beaten for the son, but here the son for the seruant: the naturall sonne for the vnnaturall child: the onely begotten, for the adopted son: the gracious son, for the sonne by grace: the beloued, for his enemies. So Christ was punished, and we are pardoned: Christ was charged with, and we discharged from our sins. For the Lord took his

for the offendor, and punished him as the offendor. It standeth not therefore with Gods iustice, to punish those our sins in our selues, that hee already charged vpon his sonne, and our sauiour Iesus Christ. But the equity of this shal the better appeare, if we shall consider, that our sins are called, and are indeed those debts which we ought vnto the Lord. For the paiment wherof, Christ entred into bonds, with this condition therin indorsed, that if we in any part failed, he of his owne substance would satisfie the whole. Now such was our beggerie, that we were not able to satisfie the same, & such was the wisedome of God, that he would not seek by rigor of law to recouer the debt of vs poore men, the best & richest of vs, being but beggerly mates, & therfore in no likelihood able to make paiment therof to his maiesty, albeit he troubled and sued vs neuer so long. The Lord therfore seeing that it was but lost labor, that was spent vpon vs, commenced his action in great wisdome against Christ, being fully as rich in glorie, in graces, & righteousnes as himselfe, and therefore euery way able to satisfie the whole: who accordingly of his owne

ſubſtance, euen of the ſubſtance of his bodie and bloud, paid vnto God the Father, whatſoeuer in iuſtice either hee could demand, or we ought. We ought to die, he ſatisfied the ſame: we ought to haue born the heauie wrath & displeaſure of the father, he ſatisfied the ſame: we ought to haue ben caſt into hell, and he ſatisfied alſo the ſame, as we beleeue in our Creed: and generally whatſoeuer we ought, he fully contented and paid vnto the Lord, inſomuch, that the father himſelfe acknowledged, and confeſſed in thunder from heauen, that in him he was wel pleaſed, euen fully ſatisfied and contented. So that euē by the confeſſion of the Father himſelfe, (ſolemnely made from the heauens by his own mouth, in the hearing of many witneſſes, who haue left the ſame for a matter of record, for our ſelues, our heirs, and all poſteritie) it plainely appeareth, that by Chriſt, he himſelfe is fully ſatisfied, contented, paied, and pleaſed: and we therfore, and therby, are fully and freely acquitted, and diſcharged, from the beginning of the world, vnto the end therof, frō all whatſoeuer debt of ſin we ought vnto the Lord. And that euen

the iustice of the Lord, who cannot demaund that as debt of vs, which Christ hath so fully satisfied for vs: especially, hauing for euer this general quittance, writte by the Lords own finger, to shew for our full discharge. So that euen by law, we haue a discharge from law, and from all our offences, and sinnes, which were those debts, for the paiment wherof we were bound vnto the Lord. So that the Lord cannot enter into iudgement with vs, nor by the rigour of the law, claime any debt at our hands. For with what iustice can the Lord demaund any debt at our hands, when Christ our surtie, who stood bound for vs, hath by the Lords own confession, satisfied whatsoeuer hee could demaund, and hath cancelled the hand writing that was against vs? So that how or by what means would the Lord recouer any debt from vs? can he sue his bond against vs? why he hath none, for it is cancelled. Or be it that he hath: why, yet we haue both the Lords own confession recorded, and also sufficient witnesses, yea, a generall quittance in these words mentioned, and fully set downe, written by the Lords owne hand, for our full discharge. The

Lord hath quite claimed all interest in our debts, and therefore can claime no interest in them against vs. The law of nations, the law of nature, the law of our land, and the law of God, cleare vs of all: euen of all our debts, of all our sinnes, of all our transgressions, and offences whatsoeuer. Thus then it appeareth euen by the iustice of God, that our sinnes are clean blotted out, and forgiuen. And this is the second reason therfrom, that argueth the same.

The third Section.

Lastly, the Lord hath already punished not onely our sinnes, but for, and with them, our owne persons in Christ. For Christ did not beare onely the punishment for our sins, but our sins themselues also. According as *Esay* beareth witnesse in his 53 chapter, where, he speaking of Christ, saith, that he bare our infirmities, and carried our greefes. And againe in the same place: My iust seruant, saith he, shall iustifie many, whose sins hee hath taken vpon himselfe. And againe, hee carrying the sins of many made intercession for sinners. For he that true goat mentioned in the 16 of *Leuiticus*, vpon whom the sinnes of all

the people of God were put, verely and indeed: which therfore he carried with himselfe, into the desart, into the hewen place, euen into the graue, or rather vnto the crosse: where he fastened them, abolished, and crucified them, together with himselfe, and so crucified our old man, and abolished the very bodie of sinne. For hee is the bodie, the goat was but the shadow: he therefore had our sins put vpon him, and bore them with himselfe, verely and indeed: euen as the goat, who was but a type, or figure of Christ, bore them but ceremonially, & in a shadow. And therefore the Apostle *Peter* in his first epistle & second chapter, giuing, as it should seeme, the true sence hereof, is not afraid to say, that Christ himselfe bore our sinnes in his owne bodie, vpon the tree. Whereby (as the Apostle *Paul* saith, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, and the fift chap.) the Lord made Christ, that knew no sin, to bee sin for vs: that he might bee made the righteousnesse of God in him. So that hereby it plainly appeareth, that our sins, and therefore, and thereby, our sinfull person it selfe also, were verely and indeed, put vpon Christ.

Whereby it came to passe, that he (notwithstanding, being stil, and euen then, the righteousnes of God vnto vs: the vnspotted and vndefiled lambe of God, in whose mouth there was no guile, and in whose heart no sinne:) that he, I say, appeared before God, in our person, whose sinnes he bore: and that as the monstrousnes of sin it selfe, which therfore was punished, and condemned in him. And so sin was condemned in the flesh, as the Apostle speaketh. For he that putteth vpon him other mens practises, putteth withall vpon himself other mens persons: and he that taketh vpon him other actions, taketh withall vpon him another person. As plainely appeareth, both by our common & vsuall phrase of speech, who vse to say, that he that hath left his old sinne, and taken vpon him a new life, that he is another manner of person, yea, and that he is not the same man: and also by the phrase and vse of the Scriptures, which cal the putting off of our sinnes, the putting off of the old man, and the putting vpon vs of righteousnes and true holines, the putting on of the new man: (as *Col.*3.vers.10.) the hid man of the heart: (as 1.*Pet.*3.vers.4.)

yea

yea Iesus Christ himselfe, as in the 13 to the Romans, and last verse. And therefore is it said of *Saul*, in the first booke of *Samuel*, the tenth chapter, & the sixt verse, that the spirit of God should rush vpon him: so that he should prophesie, and be turned into another man. So that hereby it plainely appeareth, that the putting on of other actions, and practises, maketh vs to put on, & that verily, and indeed, in our owne sensible feeling, other persons. Christ therefore putting vpon him other actions, I meane sins: (not of his owne, for hee neuer did sin, but of ours:) put therwith vpon him another person: and this person was our person, as those sinnes were our sinnes, that he tooke vpon him. For these our sinful actions being put vpon him verely and indeed: our sinfull persons also were put vpon him verely and indeed. So that our persons by this means were vpon Christ: and so we in our persons, were in & with Christ vpon the crosse. Insomuch, that it may be truly said, that I, thou, the whole world, *Salomon*, *Dauid*, *Peter*, and *Paule* himselfe, as he saith of himselfe (*Gal. 2. ver.* 20.) were (euē in our own persons) crucified with Christ. For

Christ, as one saith, was made that adultrous *Dauid*, that idolatrous *Salomon*, and that Apostata *Peter*. As *Paule* saith, he was made sinne: that is, our old man, as *Paule* in another place calleth sinne, and so our old man: and wee thereby the old men, were crucified with Christ. For this our old man being put vpon Christ: we the old men, or rather our person, (I speake not after the flesh, for we know no man after the flesh, as *Paul* saith) was also put vpon him. As therfore he that putteth vpon him new garments is therby, as we say, made anew, and another mã: as he that putteth vpon him the office of a prince, putteth on the person of a prince: as he that putteth on other practises, putteth on another shape as it were: as *Jacob* putting vpon him the garments of *Esau*, appeared so to his father, and was taken for *Esau*: & as we putting vpon vs the righteousnes of Christ, at the day of the Lord, shal put on withall the person of Christ himselfe: (for though it be but the qualitie and an accident of Christ, that we shall put on: yet it shall seeme to vs, to be euen the very person of Christ, his flesh, body, and bone, that we shal stand in before God)

so

so Christ putting on our sins vpon himselfe as a garment, put withall our persons vpon him, and so appeared in our very persons, as if it had been wee our selues before God: and so was taken by his father for vs, & punished for vs: and so wee in him were punished as verely therefore, as thou in the reuelation of the glorie of the sons of God, shalt appear in the righteousnes of Christ; the same as a white garment, being full of glory, put vpon thee, thou therby being in the person of Christ, and so shalt eue then appear as Christ, righteous before God, and shalt be saued, & liue thereby. So verely did Iesus Christ, in the day of his sorrow, and the anguish of his hart, in the day of his crosse, and of his infirmitie, appeare before God, not onely in the person of *Dauid*, of *Peter*, of *Salomon*, and such like, but also in thy person, and in the person of the whole world, as *Iohn* calleth the world, and died, and was slain, and punished in the same. So that hereby it appeareth, that thou in thine owne person, (for as the Apostle speaketh, as before we said, 2. *Cor.* 7. we know no man after the flesh) hast already ben punished for thy sinnes, and that thou

aſwell as *Paule*, haſt been crucified with Chriſt. So that already in thine own perſon, thou haſt ſuffered temporall, and eternal, earthly and helliſh puniſhments. Thou for thy whoredomes, thefts, murders, falſe witneſſe, diſobedience to thy parents, euill luſts, and deſires, for thy blaſphemie, for thy idolatrie, for the prophanation of the Sabboth, for the contempt of God, and whatſoeuer ſinne els, haſt already in Chriſt ben brought to open ſhame in the world, haſt ben euill ſpoken of, rebuked, and reuiled, haſt ben made an open gaping and gazing ſtock to men, and Angels, thou haſt beene brought before rulers and Iudges, thou haſt beene accuſed, whipped, skorned, condemned, and hanged, yea, vpon the tree of the croſſe. Thou haſt been in an agonie, and ſweat water & bloud, thou haſt felt the wrath of God, and hell fire, thou haſt ben forſaken of God, & cryed out therfore, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* thou haſt deſcended, euen gone downe into hell, and had the portion of the reprobate, and damned ſoule, thou haſt felt whatſoeuer puniſhment God in iuſtice could lay vpon thee. And therefore the Lord cannot in

iudge-

iudgement, and iustice, exact again the same rigor of the law vpon thee for thy sins. So that euen by the iustice of God, which dooth not punish (I say not with two kinds of punishments) but not twise for one sin, thou art for euer fully freed and discharged from all sinnes whatsoeuer, whether in word, in worke, or in thought, whether of knowledge, or of ignorance, of weakenes, or of wilfulnesse, thou hast alreadie beene punished for them in thine owne person, and therefore canst not in Gods iustice again be condemned for them, in the day of iudgement: in that day I say, when the wrath of God shall be reuealed frō heauen vpon all vnrighteousnes & disobedience of man. Thy punishment therefore, and thy paine is already past, and therfore feare it not: there remaineth for thee no more recompence of sinne, nor fearefull looking for of vengeance to come, but altogether mercie, & glorie, & grace, and life, and righteousnes, in, and by, and through, and with Iesus Christ our Lord: to whom therfore be all glorie, & praise, and power, and maiestie, and might, & dominion, for euer and euer, *Amen.*

These reasons are taken from God the Father, being considered in his promises, and in the natures of his mercie and iustice. Hereunto I might adde diuers other reasons, taken in part from the glory of his grace, mentioned in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the first chapter, and from his patience, his long suffering, & other the natures of God: and in part from those titles, that are by the spirit giuen vnto God the Father, as that he is our father, our husband, our prince, our friend, & such like; all which notwithstanding I wil let passe, & come to other more apparant reasons, because it is my purpose to make, not a booke, but a sermon.

The

The 5 Chapter.

Wherein the forgiueneſſe of ſinnes is proued, by a reaſon taken from the ſecond perſon in the Trinitie, to wit, the word Incarnate, euen Ieſus Chriſt, being conſidered, as he is the vine, and we the branches.

He next kind of reaſoning for the cõfirmation hereof, is taken from the ſecond perſon in the Trinitie: I meane the word Incarnate, euẽ Ieſus Chriſt, who is aboue all things, God bleſſed for euermore. Who being in like maner, as the father was, diuerſly conſidered, affordeth vnto vs diuers reaſons for the proofe hereof. Firſt therefore we will conſider him as the vine, whereof we are branches, as the ſtocke whereof we are grafts, as the root whereof wee are boughes, as the bodie whereof we are members, as the ſecond *Adam*, wherof we are new borne. For we are baptiſed into Chriſt, and thereby are borne of the firſt *Adam*, and of the ſecond *Adam*, the ſonnes of men, and the ſonnes

of

of God, of the ſeed of mã, which is mortall, and of the immortall ſeed of God, which abideth in vs, and maketh vs to crie *Abba* father. So that at one time, we haue regeneration, and generation, we are borne, and new born, we are born of the children of man, who fadeth and withereth as the flower, and we are borne againe the ſonnes of the eternall and euerliuing God: we are begotten of the firſt *Adam*, who is from the earth, earthly, and of the ſecond *Adam*, who is the Lord from heauen, heauenly. And as this is true, that as we haue borne the Image of the earthly, ſo we ſhall beare the image of the heauenly: So this alſo is true, that as wee are partakers of the earthly ſap, and ſinne, ſo are wee alſo partakers of the heauenly ſeed, & righteouſnes. And as that which is borne of vnclean ſeed, no man can make cleane: ſo that which is borne of cleane ſeed, muſt needs be cleanſed from all corruption. And as man that is conceiued in ſinne, and borne in iniquitie, muſt needs be ful of iniquitie, and a ſinner; ſo man that is new borne of water, and the holy Ghoſt, muſt needs be waſhed, and purged from all his ſinnes. For euen as the

wild

wild Oliue braunch, being grafted into the naturall Oliue tree, being made partaker of the fatnes, and nourishment thereof, is purged, and purified from his wild and bitter tast and sap: so wee being grafted into Christ the true vine, are made partakers of the heauenly nature, and so purged from the guiltines of all our sinnes and offences. And this reason is notably vrged by *Paule* in the fift to the Romanes, in these words, saying: But not as is the offence, so likewise is the gift. For if by the offence of one, many died, much more the grace of God, & the gift, which is by the grace of one man, euen Iesus Christ, hath abounded vnto many. Neither is that which entred by one sinning, like vnto the gift: for the iudgement came by one vnto condemnation, but the gift of many offences, vnto iustification. For if by the sinne of one man, death raigned by one, much more they which receiue the abundance of the grace and gift of righteousnes, shall raigne in life, by one, euen by Iesus Christ. As therfore by one sin, sin came ouer all men vnto condemnation: so by one righteousnesse, righteousnes came vpon all, to the righ-

teousnes

teousnes of life. Therfore as by the disobedience of one man, many are made sinners: so by the obedience of one man many are made righteous. So that hereby the Apostle notably sheweth vnto vs, how that Christ was as able to wash vs, as *Adam* to defile vs, Christ as able to purge vs, as *Adam* to corrupt vs, Christ as able to take away death, and sinne, as *Adam* was to bring both, euen death, and sinne. If therfore this be granted, which before hath been proued, namely, that we were borne of Christ, as we were of *Adam*: it must also needs bee inferred, that by Christ we are purged, and pardoned of all those sins, which wee drew with, and from the sin of *Adam*. So that thus we see how we may proue vnto ourselues the forgiueneſſe of our sins, by considering of Christ as the second *Adam*, into whom we are grafted and baptised, as the Apostle speaketh.

The

The 6 Chapter.

Wherein the forgiuenesse of sinnes is proued, by considering Iesus Christ, as hee is our aduocate, and intercessour, and the mediator of the new Testament.

I

SEcondly, this is proued vnto vs, by setting Christ before vs, as that mediator of the new Testament, as the Apostle calleth him: as that high Priest, which was signifyed by *Aaron*, in the law of *Moses*, who entring once into the holy place by his owne bloud, maketh intercession for the sinnes of the whole people: and as our aduocate, as *John* in his first Epistle calleth him, who liueth for euer, to make intercession, and pray vnto the Father, for all, that come vnto the Father by him. So that we are to consider of Christ, as our mediatour, who, when the Father is readie to whip vs, steppeth in betweene the Lord, and the sinner, and keepeth vs, as the mother doth her child, from the fathers rod. Yea, as our aduocate, our daies man, who is ready to make our defence, for

for our offence against God: & by pleading our weaknes, our infirmities, our childhood, and young yeares, to reconcile vs to God, and mooue his father to pardon vs. Yea, as the bishop of our souls, and that faithful high priest, which ceaseth not day nor night, to poure out his praiers, with all watchfulnesse, and feruencie, euen as he did vpon the earth, as the holy Ghost beareth witnesse for vs, vnto God the Father. And this he doth (εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς) continually: because we continually sinning, might continually be pardoned. For if he ceased to make intercession for vs, there would bee an intermission of remission of sinnes. But when he neuer ceaseth to importune, & intreat the father for vs: we are fully assured, that al our sins are for euer washed away. For the Father cannot, by reason of his merite, and will not, by reason of his mercie, denie any thing vnto his requests. Father (saith Christ) I know thou hearest me in all things: and thereby we know, that he heareth him, in the continual intercession that he maketh for the sonnes of men. And this so much the rather may we assure our selues of: for that the sonne is more deare vnto the father

then

then the seruant, the mediatour of the new Testament, which is Christ, then the mediator of the old, which was *Moses*. And *Moses*, as we know, stood in the gap, & stopped the wrath of the Lord, fell before the Lord on his face, and fasted fortie daies, and fortie nights, for the sinnes of the people of Israel, & obtained pardon for the same: much more then Iesus Christ, who for euer, and not fortie daies onely, ceaseth not to make request, shal obtain pardon at the hands of the Father (himselfe being the Son) for all the true Israelites, euen Israell which is of God, as *Paul* speaketh. What shall I speak of *Ezekiah*? who when the people sinned in eating the Passeouer, being not before sanctified, and hallowed, praied vnto the Lord, and the Lord healed the people. What shall I speake of *Iosuah*? of *Elias*? of *Dauid*? and other the men of God? at whose intercession the Lord wrought wonders in heauen aboue, and in the earth beneath. Do not euery one of these prooue vnto vs, that the sonne of God making intercession for vs, vnto the forgiuenes of our sins, shall assuredly obtaine the same at the hands of his father? And this is yet further

ther assured vnto vs, by considering on the one side the fathers gentlenes and kindnes, who is not a churlish and currish God, rough, and full of displeasure, but one in whom there is no anger, as the father himselfe protesteth in *Esay*, who is therfore the slowest to conceiue a wrath, and readiest to forgiue, as *Dauid* singeth in his 103 Psalme: and on the other side, the sonne, who, by reason it is his office to pray for vs, wil not be negligent therein: who, because he hath been tempted in al things like vnto vs, sinne only excepted, will be a faithfull, and a mercifull high Priest, in those things that are to bee done with God, concerning his people, who, by reason of the loue hee beareth to vs ward, in that he gaue his life for vs, wil be carefull and mindfull of vs: who, by reason of the oportunitie of the place, in that he is in the heauens, at the fathers hand, euē at his right hand: of the time, in that he liueth for euer: of his grace and fauour, in that he is the sonne of his loue: of his merite, in that he hath deserued it: shall be heard in all whatsoeuer he shall craue at the fathers hands, in our behalfe.

For

For here meet together, the ſonnes readineſſe, the fathers willingneſſe; the ſonnes careſulneſſe, the fathers cheareſulneſſe; the ſons importunitie, the fathers facilitie; the ſonnes merite, the fathers mercie; the ſons mindfulneſſe, the fathers gentleneſſe; the ſonnes diſpoſition, the fathers inclination; the ſonnes practiſe, the fathers purpoſe; the ſonnes grace, the fathers graciouſneſſe; the fauour of the ſonne, the fauour of the father; they fauouring the one the other, and they both fauouring vs: the one readie to craue, the other as ready to giue: the one preſent in repreſenting our praiers, the other preſently preſenting him with his requeſts: the one watchfull in asking, the other ſtriuing to beſtow: the ſonne being glorious for asking, the father being glorified for beſtowing: the father willing to gratifie the ſonne in all things, and the ſonne readie to craue all things from the father: the one being not vnwilling to graunt, the other not vnreadie to aske, whatſoeuer we aske, no though it be euen his holy ſpirit, much leſſe if it be the forgiuenes of our ſinnes.

2 I adde hereunto, that the bloud of Christ crieth vnto God the Father, and speaketh vnto the Lord for mercie, for them that are sanctified therewith. For the sprinckling of the bloud of Christ speaketh farre better things, then the bloud of *Abel*, as the Apostle testifieth to the Hebrues. For the bloud of *Abel* spake vnto the Lord for iustice, but the bloud of Christ speaketh vnto the father for mercie. The one cried for wrath, the other for peace: the one for vengeance vpon his brother, for shedding of innocent bloud: the other for pardon, either for shedding innocent bloud, or murder, or theft, or whoredome, or vsurie, or blasphemy, or for any other whatsoeuer sinne. If therefore the bloud of *Abel* cried so loud in the eares of the Lord, that it moued him to execute vengeance vpon *Cain*: much more the bloud of Iesus, which stil crieth in the ears of the Lord, will mooue him to mercie, euen to pardon our sins, and our offences. For the cric of the bloud of the sonne of God, which crieth vnto God for better things, shall not haue worser entertainement then the bloud of *Abel* had.

3 I adde further, that euen the spiri-

(as the Apostle speaketh in the eight to the Romanes) helpeth also our infirmitie, and maketh intercession for vs with grones vnspeakeable. So the spirit also of God intreateth for vs, God intreateth God, the spirit of God intreateth God the father for vs: and how then can God denie any thing to God, God the Father to his spirit, which euen with vnspeakeable grones, crieth within vs, vnto his maiestie, for pardon for our offences?

4 I adde yet further, that the Saints of God, I say not which are in the heauens (for as the Prophet saith, *Abraham* knoweth vs not, and *Iacob* remembreth vs not) but the Saints of God which are on earth, pray also for the forgiuenes of thy sins. For Christ hath taught them to say, Forgiue vs our trespasses, as wee forgiue them that trespasse against vs: willing them therby, to make mention of thee also, as well as all other the elect of God in their praiers. And therfore he teacheth them to say, forgiue vs, & not forgiue me onely, but forgiue my brother also, yea, euen thee, and all other, that are as thou art afflicted, and pressed down with the sight of thy sins. So that the elect, the holy, and the beloued of God,

God, poure forth their praiers for thee, and that not one of them alone, althogh perchance some one more especially, but al of them intreat the Lord for thy sinne, euen for the pardon therof. Now thou knowest, that the praier of the faithfull auaileth much, as Saint *James* telleth thee: it caused the sun to stand still: it stopped the heauens: it brought downe plentie of raine, and is able also to bring downe plentie of grace, of pardon, and of mercie for thy sins: to open the heauens, and to stay the wrath of God against thee, deserued by the same.

5 Adde lastly hereunto thine owne praiers, which thou continuest (with the widow in the Gospell, vnto the vnrighteous Iudge, & with the woman of *Canaan*, vnto the righteous Christ) with al feruencie in the spirit, & importunitie: so that, thy continuance in praier, strengtheneth thee against all length, thy importunitie, against al strength in temptation: the one against all delaies, the other against all denaies: and assure thy selfe, that thou shalt find the Lord as gracious vnto thee for thy importunitie as the widdow found the vnrighteous

Iudge

Iudge, and as mercifull, as the woman of *Canaan* found the righteous Christ. For how can the Lord denie so many, so continuall, so importunate, so gracious, and so earnest suiters in thy behalfe; some of them hauing so well deserued, that the father should gratifie thē herein? His son intreateth for thee, the bloud of his sonne intreateth for thee, his spirit intreateth for thee, his spouse, which is his Church, and all his deere and beloued seruants intreat for thee, thou thy selfe humblest thy selfe before God also for thy sins, and how thinkest thou can God say nay to al these suiters in thy behalfe? Imagine that thy seruant had offended thee, and thy son readie to die, if thou denies him, did intreat thee, thy wife intreated thee, thy seruāt intreated thee, and the offendor himself intreated thee, how hardly couldst thou deny their requests? The vnrighteous Iudge could not denie the importunitie of one poor widdow: and therefore the righteous God, who is the Iudge of all flesh, cannot deny not one, but many petitioners, crauing pardon at his hands for thy transgressions. Thus therfore thou maiest see, how by the intercession of Christ

thou maist assure thy self of the forgiueneſſe of thy ſinne. And this is the ſecond reaſon, taken from the conſideration of Chriſt, that prooueth the ſame vnto vs, which is alſo the ſame reaſon that *Iohn* in his firſt Epiſtle and firſt chapter vſeth, ſaying: If any man ſin, we haue an Aduocate with the Father, euen Ieſus Chriſt the righteous.

The 7 Chapter.

Wherein the forgiueneſſe of ſins is prooued, by conſidering Ieſus Chriſt, as hee is our King and ſpirituall prince.

Thirdly, this is prooued vnto vs, by cõſidering of Chriſt, not onely as the Prieſt, but as the Prince of his Church: not onely as our Aduocate, but as our King: not only as our mediator, but as our Iudge: for he beareth both thoſe offices. As hee beareth the office of the mediator, he intreateth for vs: as he beareth the office of a Iudge we intreat him: as he beareth the of-

fic

fice of the mediatour, wee pray in his name: as hee beareth the office of the king, we ptay vnto his name: as he is a Priest, he praieth for vs: as he is a prince we pray vnto him: as he is our aduocat, he intreateth the father to forgiue vs: as he is our king, and gouernour, he himselfe with the father forgiueth vs. For as himselfe testifieth of himselfe, al power is giuen vnto him, both in heauen, and ih earth, & the father iudgeth no man, but hath committed al iudgement vnto the sonne: that all men should honour the sonne, euen as they honour the Father. Yea, the sonne of man, as he testifyeth to the Iewes, in the healing of the man sicke of the palsey, hath power also to forgiue sinnes. And this as hee saith, hee would that they should know, and therefore also that we should acknowledge and beleeue. For that the knowledge hereof is especially profitable, and comfortable to the soule, that is burdened with the sight of his sins. For what can bee more for our comfort, then to know, that our Prince is our Priest: our aduocate is our king: our Iudge is our Sauior: and that he that intreateth for the forgiuenes of our sins, can of himself

selfe forgiue vs our sinnes? To speake in a word, what can be more comfortable, then to know, and to beleeue, that Iesus Christ, hath absolute power in himselfe to forgiue vs our offences? For whē the soule once knoweth that, it hopeth easily to obtain the same, and that for certaine especiall good reasons.

1 First, for that it knoweth, that Iesus Christ to purchase the forgiuenes of our sinnes, did lay downe his owne life, and therefore hauing now purchased the same for vs, he wil bestow it vpon vs. For hauing purchased the same so dearly, he wil not let it perish vnprofitably: which yet notwithstanding it should doe, if it were not giuen vnto vs. For Christ gaue his life vnto death, that he might giue vs the forgiuenes of our sinnes: for, as for himselfe he had no need of the forgiuenesse of sins, because he had no sin. It was therefore for the forgiuenesse of our sinnes, that hee paid the ransome of his bloud. If therefore he hauing purchased the same for vs, should not (himselfe hauing no vse thereof,) bestow it vpon vs: in vaine should he haue died, in vaine should he haue purchased the same with his owne bloud, in vaine

shoul

ſhould he haue ſuffred the ſhame of the croſſe, and ſo the croſſe of Chriſt ſhould be made vain, if the forgiueneſſe of our ſins ſhould not be by Chriſt giuen to vs, for the vſe thereof is in vs, as the end thereof was for vs. Now we know that Chriſt would not lay downe his life in vaine, and therefore, that he will readily and cheerfully forgiue vs our ſinnes. And this ſo much the rather we do beleeue, for that he gaue his life, that he might giue it vnto vs, and therefore much more hauing it in his own power to giue freely, h wil moſt willingly giue it vnto vs. The father that to purchaſe an inheritance to beſtow vpon his ſon, will indaunger his life, would much more willingly, if it lay in his hands, & his bands, to giue the ſame freely, freely beſtow it vpon him. The friend no doubt that to ſaue the life of his friend, and to purchaſe his pardon at the hands of the king, would giue his life vnto death, would much more willingly beſtow his pardon vpon him, if hee might doe the ſame with the ſafetie of his own life: if he had power in himſelfe to forgiue, & to pardō his offence. So that Lord, that to pardon, and to procure the forgiue-

nes of our sinnes at the hands of his father, laid downe his owne life (much more hauing power in his owne hands to forgiue vs,) will giue vnto vs the forgiuenesse of our sinnes. Being therefore iustified by his bloud, much more being now iustified, shall wee bee saued from wrath by him. For if when wee were his enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his sonne: much more being reconciled, shall we be saued by his life. As *Paul* reasoneth in the fift to the Romans. And therefore this first reason may perswade vs, that Christ that hath power in his hands to forgiue vs our sinnes, will easily be mooued to pardon them.

2 Secondly, this is farther perswaded vnto vs, by the consideration of his practise and behauiour, being here vpon the earth, which alwaies was most ful of mercie, of kindnesse, of gentlenesse, and of meeknesse, who euer came vnto him for sight, and went away blind: for hearing, and went away deafe: for speech, and went away dumbe: for legges, and went away lame: for health, and went away sick: for comfort, and went away

sorrow-

sorrowfull: for the forgiuenesse of his sinnes, and went away a sinner: who euer came to the Lord, and went away confounded, and ashamed.

The sicke of the Palsey vnto him but for health of the bodie, and hee gaue him also vnsought for, the health of soule; saying vnto him, sonne thy sins are forgiuen thee. The woman that was brought vnto him for iudgement, being taken in adulterie, found mercie at his hand, in stead of iudgement, and life in stead of death. Woman, quoth he, where are thine accusers, hath no man condemned thee, neither do I, go thy waies and sinne no more. The Iewes that crucified him, and put him, being the Lord of life, vnto death, beleeuing and being baptised into his name for the remission of their sinnes, were receiued to mercie; yea, hanging vpon the crosse, he praied for his persecutors, saying: Father, lay not this sin vnto their charge, for they know not what they doe. His disciples would, as *Elias*, haue commaunded fire to come downe from heauen, and consumed his enemies, but he reprooued them, saying: Ye know not of what spirit you are. Such a one is Christ still, hee

hath changed his place, but not his nature: his mercy is rather increased, with his honor: and his meekenes, with his glory. The heauens make him not more churlish, which were rather hellish then heauenly: but more kind, and louing, to all that faithfully call vpon him. For we must not thinke the God of all glorie, to be like vnto corrupt, & prophane man, whom honor puffeth vp, and maketh so much the more prowd, and scornefull, by how much the more glorious he is: but we must rather take him & measure him, by the farthest distance therefrom: euen by the cleane contrarie therevnto. For therefore is the manner of Christ his life with men described, that we may know how he liueth with God. That we knowing his meekenes on the earth, might looke for his mercie from the heauens. And this is the second consideration that may induce vs thereunto.

3 Lastly, this his mercie, and readinesse to forgiue vs, may the rather appear vnto vs, by the promises of mercie made vnto al those that come vnto him. As namely, there where hee saith, come vnto me all yee that are heauie loaden

and I will ease you. And again, standing in the temple, in the great day of the feast, he cried aloud, saying; If any man thirst, let him come to me, and I will satisfie him. And again to the woman of Samaria, if thou knowest who it were that saith vnto thee, giue me water, thou wouldest haue asked of him, and hee would haue giuen vnto thee, waters of the well of life, of which, whosoeuer drinketh, shall neuer hunger, nor thirst more. So that by these promises of Christ, both to giue, and to forgiue: to giue graces, and to forgiue our sinnes: we are most fully resolued in this point. Knowing, that, that Christ, that is able, is also willing: that hath power, hath also promised: that hath full authoritie of himselfe, hath also full will as himselfe, to forgiue vs our offences. So that Christ hauing ful power of himselfe to forgiue our sinnes: and we being assured of his willingnes therevnto, both by his promise, his practise, and the bloud of his crosse, we may be fully hereby persuaded of the forgiuenesse of our sinnes. Oh, if a theefe had such assurance of his Iudge, or a traitour of his king, how would it cheere his dying soule? wee

haue this strong assurance of our Iudge, of Christ our Lord, and King, and why doe we not cheere in the knowledge heteof? Oh let no feare of death, or sin feare vs, so long as the Lord of life, and righteousnesse, is our King, and gouerneth vs, it is the Lord that iustifieth, and who shall condemne vs? it is Christ that died, yea, which is risen from the dead, yea which sitteth at the right hand of God the father, who also intreateth for vs. Who shall seperate vs from the loue of Christ? shall oppression, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakednesse, or daunger, or sword? no, we are more then conquerours by him which hath loued vs; as the Apostle teacheth vs in the eight to the Romanes. This then is the third consideration of Christ, that confirmeth vnto vs the forgiuenesse of our sinnes.

The

The 8 Chapter.

Wherein the forgiuenes of sins is proued by considering Christ, as hee is our Physition, that with his owne bloud cureth and healeth all our infirmities both corporall and spirituall.

Fourthly, the forgiuenesse of our sinnes is argued, by considering Christ as a sacrifice for sin, sweet smelling, holie, and acceptable vnto God as a peace offering. Yea a sinne offering; yea, as that immaculate, and Paschall lambe, by whose bloud, wee for euer attaine the forgiuenes of our sins: and that in a double respect. First, for that Christ is that good Phisition, who not by the roots of China, or the trees of America, by *Paracelsus* his minerals, or *Gallens* his simples, but by his owne most precious bloud, helpeth all our infirmities. For the bloud of Christ is that purgation, that cleanseth and purgeth away euen from the very soule, and not from the body only, (which were but a

ſmall thing in reſpect of this,) all the corruption, infection, and filth thereof. For as S. *Iohn* ſaith, the bloud of Chriſt purgeth vs from all our ſins: that therefore is the onely purger of the ſoule, which worketh according to the *Dos*, or gift of Chriſt, the phiſition of the ſoule, ſtrongly vpon the corruptions thereof: and bringeth them, and expelleth them all quite and cleane out of the ſame. Oh if *Gallen*, or *Hippocrates*, or *Paracelſus*, or other doctors of phiſicke, had been conſulted with: if they had been ſent for to practiſe vpon the ſame: if they had miniſtred either pils, or potions, or confections, or boles, or electuaries, if they had miniſtred Rubarbe, or Caſſia, or Tamarnidi, or the Greeke pill, or any ſuch like, perchance they would haue purged the bodie: only the bloud of Chriſt, is that ſtraunge, and ſtrong purgation, that worketh vpon the very ſoule, and purgeth the ſame, euen as Rubarbe, or any ſuch like, purgeth the bodie from the filth thereof: yea, the bloud of Chriſt is that water that waſheth away the matter of our feſtered wounds, and cooleth all the heat that flaſheth in our ſoule, be-

ing

ing bred by the fierie darts of the deuill. For as *John* testifieth in his Reuelation, Christ hath washed vs by his bloud, it is that oile that healeth all our wounds. For as *Esay* saith, by his stripes are we healed: it is that Triacle, or Cordiall, more precious then the confection of pearles, which maketh a man sound, when he is readie to swoune for weakenes. It is that Antidotum, or preseruatiue more soueraigne then the Vnicornes horn, that defendeth the soule from the poyson of the old serpent. It is that restoratiue, that euen then, when we are readie to loose our life, euen the life of the soule, which is faith, and to die in dispaire, being taken into our soule, reuiueth, cheareth, and quickneth it, and so maketh vs to liue, when wee die. For as Christ testifieth, he that eateth his flesh, and drinketh his bloud, hath eternall life abiding in him: so that though hee die, yet shall hee liue. It is that wine, that cheereth the soule: and that meat that strengtheneth the same, being exceeding weake. To speak in a word, it cureth all the diseases of the soule; it cureth the pockes of the soule, that commeth by adulterie: the

gout

gout of the ſoule, that commeth by eaſe: the ſurfeting of the ſoule that commeth by gluttonie and drunkennes: the dead palſie, that commeth of the coldneſſe in profeſſion: the conſumption of the ſoul, that commeth by decaying in religion, I mean by Apoſtacie: the burning ague of the ſoule, that cõmeth by ouermuch choller & anger: the leproſie of the ſoul, which is ſinne. And that which all other phiſicke cannot doe vnto the bodie, this doth vnto the ſoule. For it cureth them that are loue ſick, euen ſick for the loue of women, gold, ſiluer, promotion, & of thẽſelues: yea, it taketh away old, inueterat, & confirmed diſeaſes: though they haue ben continued ten, twentie, fortie, foureſcore, a hundred yeares: yea, our whole life: yea, it healeth naturall infirmities, and thoſe which were brought into the world, euen original ſin, which we had from our fathers infection.

And that which is more, we are born blind, ſo that we could not behold the light of the glory of God, in the face of Ieſus Chriſt, & yet this maketh vs ſee: we were born deafe, ſo that our eares, as the eares of the Adder, were ſtopped againſt the word, & this openeth them:

we were dumbe, that we could not speak to the glorie of God, and this giueth vs speech: we were borne lame, so that we could not walk in the waies of the Lord, & this maketh vs whole: for the bloud of Christ is as able to cure the lame legs of the soule as the name of Christ in the Apostles spirit was able to cure him that was a cripple borne, and lay begging at the beautifull gate of the temple: the bloud of Christ is as able to cure all the diseases whatsoeuer of the soule, as the word of Christ was, to cure all the infirmities of the body, whatsoeuer. And yet I know not how, wee account not of this medicine: either because it seemeth base vnto vs, because we know not the strength and vertue thereof: or else because we need it not. For as whole men care not for phisike, and them that are sound, account not of purgations, but cast thē in the fire, or at their heeles: so they that are lusty in soule, that think themselues sound as the Pharisie, that are not wounded at the hart, as the Iews, in the second of the *Acts*, contemne the bloud of Christ, & make no reckoning thereof. But when they are once wounded with the feeling of their sins, then they

they take it to the hart, that before they set at their heeles: and neuer doth man know the profit of this bloud, vntill hee haue ben sick in mind. All other medicines of the bodie will not helpe some one disease thereof: but this being but one, helpeth all infirmities of the soule. And if it were not for this remedy, surely wee had beene dead long before this time: for wee could neuer haue liued halfe so long. But now hauing this, it is a present remedie: where as otherwise euery light word, and euery little fall, would haue killed bodie and soule: but such is the force of the bloud of Christ, that hauing the same readie, the strongest poison of the serpent cannot ouercome vs, the hottest firie dart burne vs, nor the greatest wound kill vs: we are presently whole, so soon as we applie it. Oh if a man had such a medicine for the bodie, as would preserue him from the plague in all infections, from the pocks after all adulteries, from the gout after all ease, from daunger after all surfets, from death in all sicknesses, and after all wounds: that would cure old, and confirmed diseases, & those also which were naturall: of what price, and that iustly,

would

would he value the ſame? But the death of Jeſus Chriſt, and the ſhedding of his bloud, doth, as before was ſhewed, bring preſent remedie for all diſeaſes of the ſoule: which are the ſinnes therof: (for the ſame is ſin to the ſoule, that is ſicknesse to the bodie) what account then ought we to make of this death, which death ouercame death: which ouercame hell, and ſin it ſelfe? So that we may ſay away death, thou art ouercom by death: away death, thou art ouercome by life: his weaknes is ouercom by his ſtrength: our infirmitie by his power: our ſinne by his righteouſnes: his death brought our life: he was weak, to ſtrengthen vs: he baſe, that we glorious: he ſicke, that wee ſound: hee a baniſhed man, that we citizens: he fleſh, that we ſpirituall: he ſhed his bloud, that we might be healed. We may therfore conclude, that no ſin can hurt vs, ſith the death of Chriſt and his bloud, is a preſent remedie againſt all. And thus in this firſt reſpect, the bloud of Chriſt being the phiſick for the ſoule, argueth the forgiuenes of our ſins, in that it prooueth the curing of our infirmities.

The

The 9 Chapter.

Wherein the forgiuenes of sins is proued, by considering Christ as he is our redeemer, who hath with his own bodie purchased of his Father the pardon for our sinnes, and with his own bloud ransomed vs, and paid the price of the redemption of our sinnes.

IN the second respect, the bloud of Christ proueth the forgiuenesse of our sinnes, for that it is not onely the Phisicke of the soule, which purgeth the same from all corruptions, that is, the sinnes thereof: but also that price, by the which, Christ purchased of his father, the pardon for our sinnes. For as the Apostle teacheth vs (in this present verse) we haue redemption by his bloud, the forgiuenes of our sins. And *Peter* in his Epistle telleth, that wee were redeemed from our vaine conuersation, not with corruptible things, as gold, and siluer, but with the most precious bloud of the sonne of God. Wherby the Apostle teacheth vs, that as the pardon of our sinnes from the hands of God, is farre

more

more excellent then the Popes pardon (which may, whether it be for murder or theft, or whoredome, or any such like be purchased for gold, or siluer, or wooll, or such like trash:) so it is to be purchased with a price farre more precious, euen with the bloud of the son of God, which onely was able to purchase our pardon for vs. And therfore if the same had ben wanting; alas what had there beene left in vs, able to haue procured the same? A man would fast water, and bread, al the daies of his life: yea, hee would trauell to Rome, to Ierusalem, and farther, bare footed, and bare legged: yea, he would whip himself with cords, wreathed with yron: yea, launce himselfe with penne kniues, as the Priests of *Baal*: he would giue abundance of gold and siluer: hee would keepe open house, giue great doale: releeue many poore, buy many trentall of masses, build Abbies, Monasteries, Churches, Schooles, and Colledges, as the Papists do, for the pardon of their sinnes: yea, he would (as they) lay open their shame to the Priestes eares, in auricular confession, if that would purchase him pardon for his sin: yea, he would with the Iews, come into

the

the courts of the Lords house, and of-
fer many Bullocks, Rams, and Goats;
he would shed riuers of bloud, & poure
out streams of oile vnto the Lord: yea
hee would (as *Micheas* saith) giue the
fruit of his wombe, for the sinne of his
soule: and as the Idolators did, make
his sonnes to go through fire, and offer
them to deuils, if all this would procure
vnto him pardon for his sin. Yea, what
would not a wounded conscience giue,
to be disburdened of the weight of his
sinne, and to purchase vnto himselfe a
pardon, not from the Pope, but from the
Lord for his offences? But it will cost to
great a price for him to redeem his own
soule, or the sin thereof, with any thing
in himselfe. He must therefore let that
alone for euer, and look for the pardon
of his offences, by the bloud of Iesus
Christ; which is that onely price, by the
which it might be procured, which be-
ing accordingly offered vnto God the
Father, and that vpon the aultar of the
crosse: he hath with the value and price
thereof, purchased that, which all, both
heauen and earth could not otherwise
haue procured: euen the forgiuenes of
our sinnes. And thereby hath left vnto

vs an assurance, for the attaining of the pardon of our offences. For farre bee it fro vs, that we should account the Lord either a cosener, who would deceiue vs, or an oppressor, or an extortioner, that would by violence keepe from vs any such thing, as we had right vnto by the way of purchase. Hauing therfore right vnto the pardon of our sinnes, because Christ hath purchased the same with his blood: we are assured, that our sins must and shal be for euer forgiuen, and blotted out. That Lord, that giueth more then we deserue, will not keepe from vs that which is our due: and he that giueth all things freely, will not debarre vs of that, which is purchased for vs so dearely, as with the blood of Iesus Christ.

The

The 10 Chapter.

Wherein are touched two reasons taken from the spirit of God (the holie Ghost, being the third person in the Trinitie.) The first as the spirit is considered, to worke repentance & contrition in vs, and so washeth vs from our sinne. The other, as the spirit breedeth and worketh peace in our conscience, wherewith the forgiuenesse of our sinnes is sealed.

NTo those reasons taken from the Father and the Sonne: I might adde two other principall reasons taken from the spirit of God.

1 The first whereof is this: namely, that one and the selfesame spirit, that is called by *Paule* (*Rom.*8.) the spirit of bondage to feare, and also that worketh godly sorow in vs vnto repentance, mentioned (2.*Cor.cap.*7.) is also that sanctifying spirit of God, which washeth and cleanseth vs from all our sinnes: and therfore it is compared to fire and water: because as fire it purgeth, as water it cleanseth vs from all our sinnes: and therfore is it that the Apostle saith (*Cor*

6.)

6.)that ye are washed, that ye are cleansed, that yee are sanctified, in the name of Iesus Christ, and by the spirit of our God. So that they that sorrow rightly for their sinnes, and are possessed with the spirit of bondage to feare, euen to feare hell, Gods wrath, the deuill, and their owne estate, may be assured, that the same spirit that worketh the sorrow, washeth the soule: that breedeth the feare, bringeth the fauour of God: that defileth their cheeks with teares, cleanseth their soules from sinne also: for one spirit worketh all, and in all the elect of God. So that while we lay open our sins, we lay them vpon Christ, who beareth them, and taketh them away. While we hide not our sins, the Lord hideth them. He that sorroweth rightly for thē, looseth all sorrow for them: and hee that rightly seeth them, looseth the sight of them for euermore.

2 The second reason, is taken from the peace of conscience, which the spirit working in vs, dooth seale the forgiuenesse of our sinnes, as the Apostle plainely sheweth in the fift to the Romans, where he saith, being iustified by faith, we are at peace with God. So that

if

if euer ſince we ſinned, we felt the peace of conſcience, it was the worke of the ſpirit, that ſealed our iuſtification, that is, the full forgiuenes of our ſinnes. And therfore hauing once felt the ſame, we need not doubt, whether our ſinnes be forgiuen vs, yea, or no. But as I haue breefly omitted the other reaſon: ſo I wil defer this vnto a more proper place. And ſo concludiug thoſe reaſons that ariſe frō God, conſidered in his perſons; I will come vnto other reaſons taken from man, being conſidered in his ſins.

The 11 Chapter.

Wherein is contained the firſt argument, or reaſon, which to proue the forgiueneſſe of ſins, is taken from the creature (the reaſons being before taken from the creator) & that frō mā, conſidered in himſelf, with his eſtate being naturally inclined to ſin.

THe firſt wherof is taken frō the conſideration of the natural inclination of mā vnto ſin. For as *Dauid* ſaith of himſelfe, In ſin

wa

was I conceiued, and in iniquitie did my mother bring me forth. And *Iob* demandeth, ſaying: Who can make that cleane, that is borne of vncleane ſeed? And *Paule* plainely teacheth vs, that by the ſinne of one man, ſinne raigned ouer all: and that in *Adam* all ſinned. So that as wee drew frõ *Adam* our being, ſo our ſinning: as our fleſh and bone, ſo our corruption: as our nature, ſo our ſinne naturally. And as there is in the ſeed of our parents, wherof we are born, a naturall inclination, by the bleſſing of God to grow: ſo there is in the ſame alſo a naturall inclination, by the ſin of *Adam*, vnto ſinne. And as the crabbed ſtock, ſendeth forth his ſoure iuice into his braunches, which therfore naturally bring forth crabs, for fruits: ſo *Adam* being that ſinfull ſtock whereof we are the naturall braunches, ſendeth forth his ſinne into vs: who therefore naturally bring forth fruit vnto ſin, in great plentie. So that look how naturall it is for man to grow, to eat, to laugh, to reaſon, or to ſpeak: ſo naturall alſo is it for him to ſin, Therefore is it that ſinne raigneth ouer all, in ſuch ſort, as that there was neuer heard of any ſuch man,

(besides Christ, who was not begotten after the maner of men) as was void of sinne. For if we say we haue no sin, we deceiue our selues, & there is no truth in vs. *Paul* confesseth concerning himselfe, that the euill which he would not do, he doth. *Daniel* confessed in his praier vnto the Lord, his owne sins, and the sinnes of the people. *Noah*, his drunkennes: *Iobs* cursing: *Dauids* adulterie: *Salomons* idolatrie: *Peters* apostacie: and *Moses* infidelitie: are by the word, manifested vnto the wholeworld. And briefly, what man is he that may not learne to pray, as Christ hath taught him, saying: *Forgiue vs our trespasses, as we forgiue them that trespasse against vs.* True it is that many there bee, who haue praied with *Paul*, to haue the messenger of Satan clean remoued: yea, and haue striued to attaine vnto the power of the death, and resurrection of Iesus Christ and vnto the resurrection of the dead that euen in this life, they might be freed fully from sinne. But neuer could either *Paul*, as himselfe confesseth, or any other therefore, attain thereunto. And no maruel: for nature may well be corrected, but neuer by any labour clean

roote

rooted out. And therefore as the Cat of the mountain cannot change hir ſpots, nor the Ethyopian his skin, ſith nature hath made them ſuch: ſo neither can man cleane put away his ſinne, ſith nature hath made him a ſinner. Which thing howſoeuer, it cannot excuſe the obſtinat, yet it may comfort the weake: knowing that the Lord wil be more eaſily moued to pardon thoſe our ſinnes, which nature will we, nill we, inforceth vs to do. For when we ſinne, we do but our nature. And therefore in reaſon, we the rather are to be pardoned. For euen with reaſon, this is a good, and therfore a common reaſon, why we ſhould ſpare our brute beaſts, behauing themſelues more brutiſhly: alas, ſay we, let them alone, they do but their nature. And why ſhould it not ſeem vnto reaſon, as good reaſon, why the Lord (in regard of whome, man is not ſo much, as a brute beaſt is vnto man) ſhould ſpare, & not for merit, but for pitie pardon man, who when he ſinneth, doth nothing elſe but his nature: for his own nature driueth him vnto ſin. This reaſon therefore ſeemed ſo good vnto the holy Ghoſt, and ſo comfortable vnto *Dauid*, that he eſpe-

cially vseth the same in his 103 psalm, to shew, that as a father pittieth his owne children, so the Lord (as mercie respecteth miserie, so pitie respecteth frailtie) pittieth them that feare him. For, saith he, the Lord knoweth our making, hee remembreth that wee are but dust, and that the daies of mortal man, are but as the grasse, and that he flourisheth, but euen as the flower of the field, when the wind bloweth vpon it, it is no longer, neither is the place thereof known any more. This therefore is the first reason taken from the consideration of our selues, to whom being begotten in sin, it is naturall to sinne.

The 12 Chapter.

Wherin is contained the second reason, taken from man, to prooue the forginenesse of sins, by the consideration of our infancie, wee neuer being but new borne babes, so long as we liue.

THe second reason is taken from the consideration of our infancie, which so long continueth as we liue in this present world. For in regard both of God, & also of that perfect aged man in Iesus Christ, we are no more, nor better then new borne babes. And therefore doth the Apostle *Peter* in his first Epistle & second chapter, call vs babes, saying: as new borne babes desire the spirituall and guiltles milke of the word. So likewise doth *Iohn* in his first Epistle, & last chapter, call vs, saying: *Babes, keepe your selues from Idols*. And for this cause doth the Lord appoint vnto his Church in this present life, Kings and Queenes, to be nursing fathers, & nursing mothers: and feedeth it as it were with pap, euen

with the ſincere milke of the word. And in all other actions dealeth ſo with vs, as parents with their yong infants. And no maruell: for in euery action of this preſent life, wee ſhew our ſelues to bee more then babes. Our weake knees, our babiſh reaſon, our childiſh imagination, our dallying with God our Father, our vnſeaſonable cries, our vnreaſonable requeſts, our fathers rod, the blaſpheming of his name, the defiling of our ſelues, our beds, and our garments, and the often fals which we catch, as children that are vnweaned, and cannot go alone, do more then conuince the ſame. Ad hereunto, how late it is ſince that we were new borne, and (as babes) begotten by the immortall ſeed of the word: and this doctrine will ſhine as cleare as the ſun, at the noone day. For what though we haue beene regenerate an hundred yeres ſince: is it in regard either of God, with whom a thouſand years are but as one day: or in regard of immortalitie, and that long aged life, that we, that are borne of the immortall ſeed of God, ſhall bee partakers of: is it, I ſay, in regard thereof, any more then yeſterday? So that it appeareth hereby, that

the

the strongest Christian, and the perfectest man in God, is scarse a child of one daies age. And therefore are they fitly called by Peter, ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη, euen now, not onely new borne babes: as it were in their bloud. The full persuasion whereof, may breed in vs a liuely hope of the mercie and fauour of God to vs ward. Knowing that our parents, after the flesh, could euen then, when we plaied the wantons, defiled our beds, and our garments, miscalled our parents, yea disquieted them with our cries in the night season, be contented not only to pardon vs, but also to laugh at vs, considering that as yet we were but in our infancie. How much more then thinke we, wil the Lord our heauenly father, euen when we liue wantonly, walk weakely, speake foolishly, thinke childishly, euen when we defile our selues with bloud, our beds with sin, or our souls with blasphemie, and euill speaking, or with any other such like sin, be readie (be it not spoken to the maintenance of any of these sinnes) to forgiue vs? considering our childhood, our young and tender, and therefore indiscreet yeares: wherein albeit we worke foolishly, or speake

vnſeemely, yet we doe according to our vnderſtanding, and ſpeake, as they ſay of children, as well as their wit ſerueth them. Indeed, if after this preſent life, when we ſhall come to the meaſure of the age of Chriſt, full grown, euen to a perfect man: if then I ſay, we ſhould (as we are aſſured we ſhall not) commit any of theſe ſins, and ſlip into any of theſe ſals, then there were no ſuch hope left vnto vs, by reaſon of our confirmed age: but now to ſinne, is agreeable to our yeares: and to pardon ſin, is agreeable to Gods wiſedome, who knoweth how childiſh we are. And theſe are thoſe reaſons taken from our ſelues, to proue the ſame. Now let vs conſider thoſe reaſons, that are taken from ſinne it ſelfe.

The 13 Chapter.

Wherein is contained the firſt reaſon, taken from ſinne it ſelfe, which is drawne from the name of ſinne, being called our debt.

THe firſt reaſon for the prooſe hereof taken from ſinne it ſelfe, is drawne from that name, that the ſpirit of the Lord our GOD giueth, as in other

other places, ſo eſpecially in the ſixt of *Mathew* vnto ſin, where it is called our debt, that wee owe vnto the Lord. For there the Lord teacheth vs to pray after this manner, ſaying: *Forgiue vs our debts, as we forgiue our debters.* For ſo the Greek words ὀφειλήματα, and ὀφειλέταις, doe ſignifie. Where it is manifeſt, that by comparing this place of *Mathew*, with the 11 of *Luke*, & the fourth verſe, that by debts he meaneth ſinnes. For that which *Mathew* calleth our debts, *Luke* calleth our ſinnes, ſaying: *Forgiue vs our ſinnes, as we forgiue euery one that is indebted vnto vs.* So that hereby it is euident, that our ſins are thoſe debts of ours, which we owe vnto the Lord. Which being ſo, there ariſeth vnto vs a notable perſwaſion of the readines of the Lord, therby to pardon and forgiue them. For what do we thinke, that the Lord careth for ſuch debts, that hee will exact them at our hands by the rigour of the law? That he will ſue vs, arreſt vs, implead vs, or impriſon vs for the ſame? Why is ſin, which is our debt, ſo deare, ſo pretious, and of ſuch account with the Lord, as that hee will ſtrain vs, and ſo conſtrain vs to pay the ſame vnto his maieſtie? Surely, if

a man ought vs a boxe on the eare, wee would ſcant ſtrain him for ſuch a debt. For we had rather looſe it, then law for it: ſuch is our debt of ſinne, which we owe vnto the Lord. For ſin is as it were a box, giuen to the Lord in his face, ſtriking immediately againſt the glorie of his maieſtie; and then will the Lord thinke wee, driue vs by order of law to pay the ſame. Why, is the Lord ſo poore, and ſo beggerly, that he were vndone, if wee did not make paiment of this one debt vnto him? Hath hee ſuch need of ſin, that he knew not what ſhift to make if he had not this debt of our ſinne out of our hands? Why, would it ſo greatly hinder the Lord, to forbear it, or to forgiue it? No, no, it would turn exceedingly to the aduancing of the riches of the glorie of his grace, to forgiue the ſame vnto vs, as before we proued. And therfore ſith to forgiue vs our debts) as our Sauiour Chriſt calleth our ſinnes) is no meanes to diminiſh, but rather to encreaſe the riches of the glorie of the grace of God: ſith the treaſurie of his mercie is therby more & more amplified, and inlarged: ſith it turneth to the Lords aduantage: ſith he getteth, while

he

he giueth, and forgiueth: we may be fully assured, that the Lord, who is (if I may so speake) couetous of his owne glorie, will easily and readily forgiue vs our offences. And this is the first reason, taken from the name of sinne.

The 14 Chapter.

Wherin is contained the second reason, takē from sinne it selfe, to proue forgiuenesse of sins: which ariseth from the effect of sin, seruing to set forth the abundance of the grace of God, and to magnifie his power.

The second reason taken from sin, ariseth from that effect, which sin worketh, as wee say *per accidens*: that is, not from his owne and proper effect, but from the worke of the Lord thereby. For it seruetb to the setting forth of the abundance of the grace of God: and to the magnifying of the power of the Lord. As plainely appeareth both by the testimonie of *Paule*: who saith, that where sin aboundeth, there grace aboundeth

also: and also by the answer of the Lord made vnto *Paule*, who said vnto him (praying, as himself testifieth three times that the messenger of Sathan, the prick of the flesh, might bee remooued away from him) my grace is sufficient for thee. For by thy weakenes is my power made perfect: or, as some translate it, made strong. This answere of the Lord vnto *Paule*, I take to be spoken vnto all men, and so especially vnto my self. For of a truth Lord, thy power is made strõg indeed by my weakenes. For now I being (indued, though with some good gifts) ouercome by Sathan, do know the power of the spirit that dwelt in thee, to bee perfect, and powerfull, that neuer could be ouercome by Sathans assault. Thus is thy power made perfect by my weaknes, by comparison. Again, O Lord, when I am ouercome, I feele the power of thy death, to ouercome Sathan, hell, and condemnation: and of a weak man to strengthen me so, that thy power is made strong by thy victorie. For the power of Sathan, and of my sinnes, cannot ouercom the power of thy death, which is Sathans death, and of power against him. Againe my God, I being weake, do some-

ometimes ouercome, when before I was ouercome: by whose power was this but by thy power? which is so much the greater, by how much I am the weaker. For Sathan is wonderfull strong, and I wonderfull weake. How then could I ouercome him being wonderfull strong, except thy strength were wonderfull in me, being wonderfull weak? Oh Christ be strong in me, for I am weak. Thy power O Christ, is the greater, & thy grace so much the more abundant, by how much my sins are the greater, that thou pardonest. To pardon small sins, is great grace: but to pardon many sinnes, and those monstrous also, magnifieth the abundance of thy grace to me ward: and not onely vnto me, but it commendeth the excellencie thereof, to all that tast thereof. Lord, I speake not these things to make them a cloke for my sinne, but a comfort to my soule: nothing doubting, but that I doing that, which it is thy will I should do, and that for the glorie of thy grace, and the perfecting of thy power, shal easily obtain pardon for the same: yea, though it be sinne that I do. Thus haue I by mine owne practise, shewed the force of this reasō, that thou

maiest

maiest read it, know it, feele it, and practise it at one time. To this reason, I might adde one other, from that name of sinne, where it is called our infirmitie, or disease, and our phrenzie, and madnesse, as the Philosopher calleth it. Which might therefore seeme the rather to bee pardoned, because it was done in our madnesse. But I will omit this reason, and come to the consideration of other reasons, takē, not as these, from euery man in himselfe, being considered with his sinnes: but from others, euen men, and deuils.

The 15 Chapter.

Wherein is contained the first reason, taken from man, as he is considered in others; which is drawne from the examples of other men, by which the eternitie of the forgiuenesse of sinnes, is further assured vnto vs.

ANd first wee will consider the examples of other mē, by the which the assurance of the forgiuenesse of our sinnes, is yet further assured vnto vs. For what one sinne haue wee com-

committed, which other the Saints of God haue not, either before, or after their calling, committed? and yet, as the ſpirit teſtifieth, receiued pardon for the ſame. Haſt thou committed adulterie? why ſo had the woman that was brought vnto Chriſt in the eight of *John*: ſo had the woman of Samaria in the fourth of *John*: for Chriſt ſaid vnto her, thou haſt had fiue husbands, and him whom now thou haſt, is not thy husband. So had *Dauid* with *Berſeba*, and yet the Prophet ſaid vnto him, the Lord hath taken away thy ſinne, that thou ſhalt not die therefore. Haſt thou beene poſſeſſed with the deuill? ſo was *Mary Magdalene*, who had ſeuen diuels caſt out of her. Haſt thou diſtruſted the Lord? ſo did *Moſes* at the waters of ſtrife. Haſt thou as it were deſpaired? ſo almoſt did *Ieremy*, who ſaid in the third of his Lamentations, that he was a caſt away, and there was no hope for him in God. So did *Dauid* in his 77 Pſalme, ſaying; Will the Lord caſt me off for euer? ſhould he be no more intreated? ſhould his louing kindnes faile for euer? & his promiſe from one generatiõ to another come vtterly to an end? Haſt thou murdered,

dered and ſlaine thy brother? ſo did *Dauid* murder *Vrias*. So did the Iews put to death, and ſlay the Lord of life, as *Peter* chargeth them in the ſecond of the *Acts*, and yet they were by the ſame Apoſtle baptiſed to the forgiuenes of their ſins. Haſt thou ſtolne and robbed thy brother? So did the theefe that was crucified with Chriſt, to whom notwithſtanding Chriſt ſaid, This day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe. Haſt thou been an oppreſſor, an extortioner, and an vſurer? So was *Zacheus*, who notwithſtanding repenting, and making reſtitution, heard that comfortable ſaying of Chriſt vnto him, happie art thou *Zacheus*, this day is health come vnto thine houſe. Haſt thou contended and fallen out with thy brother? So did *Paul* and *Barnabas*: betwixt whome the contention was ſo hot, that they departed aſunder, one taking *Luke*, and the other *John*. But haſt thou (being but one man) committed all theſe ſinnes? Haſt thou beene an Idolater? defiled the temple of God? beaten down his truth? erected Idolatrie? haſt thou beene a witch, a coniurer, a ſouthſayer? haſt thou ſhed abundance of innocent bloud, ſo that the ſtreetes flow

there-

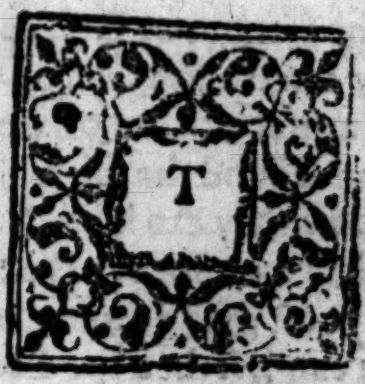
therewith? hast thou committed more abhominations, then the Cananites, or the Emorites, whom for their filthines the Lord cut out of the land of the liuing? hast thou offered thy sonnes and daughters, & sacrificed them to deuils in fire? All these things did *Manasses*, as it appeareth in the 21 chapter of the second booke of the Kings: and yet he returned vnto the Lord,, and found fauour and mercie for all his sinnes: as it appeareth in the 33 chapter of the second booke of the Chronicles. Are thy sinnes greater then the sinnes of *Manasses*? or is the mercie, and the arme of the Lord shortened? is the Lord a respecter of persons? did he forgiue *Manasses*, repenting him of his sinne? and will hee not forgiue thee, returning vnto himselfe, and calling vpon his name? is not the Lord rich in mercie vnto all them that call vpon him faithfully? whether they be Iewes, or Gentiles, Greekes, or Barbarians, there is no difference in the Lord. Are these things left vnto vs in the word, either to follow, or to comfort vs withall? Doth not *Paule* teach vs, that whatsoeuer is written, is written for our learning, that through the patience, and com-

comfort of the Scriptures, wee might haue hope? euen bee comforted, while wee hope, that the ſame Lord, that hath been thus mercifull vnto others, will as well be mercifull vnto vs alſo: that he will make our ſins, that are in like manner as red as skarlet, as white as ſnow: and that are like vnto the purple, to be as the wooll: as himſelfe hath promiſed by the mouth of his Prophet *Eſay*. This is the firſt reaſon, which is taken from other men.

The

The 16 Chapter.

Wherein is contained the second reason, taken from man, being considered in others: which is drawne from the testimonie of others: as of the Ministers of the word of God, of the Prophets, of Christ himselfe, of the Apostles, and all other holy men of God, who as faithfull witnesses announce and confirme the forgiuenesse of sinnes.



THe second reason is taken from the testimonie of others, who affirme and so confirme this vnto vs. And herein we wil first consider the testimonie of the faithfull ministers of the Gospel of God, to whom thou being afflicted, oughtest to repaire for comfort. And that, both by the expresse commandement of the Lord himselfe, who by the mouth of his Prophet *Malachy*, saith, that the Priests lips shal contain knowledge, and the people shall inquire the law at his mouth. And also by the example of the Iewes, in the second of the Acts: who being wounded in conscience,

ence, came to *Peter*, and the reſt of the Apoſtles, ſaying; *Men and brethren, what ſhal we do.* For the Miniſters are the Phiſitions & Surgeons of the ſoule, to heale the ſame, as well as they are the Lords warriors, and ſo by the force of his ſpirituall weapons, of power, to caſt downe euery high hold, euery ſtrong thought, and euery name that is exalted againſt the name of God, and Ieſus Chriſt. And therefore, as by the armour of God on the left hand, they can wound thy conſcience: ſo by the armor of God on the right hand, they can wound the ſpiritual enemy. As by the law, they can kil thee; ſo by the Goſpel they can quicken thee: as by the one they caſt thee downe: ſo by the other they can lift thee vp. For they are the diſpenſers of the manifold graces of God, and the Lords ſtewards, to giue to euery one his portion in due time. Iudgement, to whom iudgement appertaineth, and mercie vnto thee, vnto whome mercie belongeth. So that if thou repair to them for comfort, and if they ſhal giue thee comfort, thou maiſt be comforted indeed. If they ſhall giue thee thy portion, in the forgiueneſſe of ſinnes, they giue vnto thee, as vnto the

Lords

Lords ſeruant, that thy portion therein which is due vnto thee. If they ſhall ſay vnto thee, that thy ſinnes are forgiuen thee, it is all one, as if the Lord himſelfe had ſaid ſo much vnto thee. For they are the Lords ſeruants, not onely as other men, to doe their maiſters will, but his meſſage alſo: not onely to ſerue him with doing, but with going alſo: not only to come when they are called, but to runne when they are ſent. For they are as it were the Lords footmen, which are ſent by him to doe his meſſage, and to ſignifie his mind vnto thee. And therefore is it that the Apoſtle asketh in the tenth to the Romanes, how they ſhall heare without a preacher, and how they ſhall preach except they be ſent. So that when the Miniſter commeth vnto thee, to comfort thee, & to aſſure thee of the forgiuenes of thy ſins, thou muſt know for a certaintie, that he is ſent vnto thee by the Lord, to do this his meſſage vnto thee, & to tell thee, euen from the Lords owne mouth, that thy ſinnes are forgiuen thee. And this thou maieſt and muſt aſſure thy ſelfe of, whether he come vnto thee, either voluntarily without thy procurement (as *Nathan* did vnto *Dauid*,

who

who ſaid vnto him (hearing the confeſ-
ſion of his ſin) and the Lord hath taken
away thy ſinne, that thou ſhalt not die
for it: and as Chriſt came voluntarily
vnto the Iewes, without their ſending
for him, the ſpirit of God hauing an-
nointed him, and ſent him to preach the
glad tidings of the Goſpel, euen vnto ſo
many as were a far off:) or whether he
come vnto thee, being ſent for by thee,
as *Peter* was by *Cornelius*, who although
he came vnto *Cornelius*, being ſent for
by him, yet both was *Peter* by the viſion
which he ſaw, warned by God himſelfe
to goe: & alſo *Cornelius* commanded to
ſend for him, by an Angell: but thou by
the ſpirit. And therfore when the Mini-
ſter commeth vnto thee, to tel thee that
thy ſinnes are forgiuen thee, aſſure thy
ſelfe as the truth is in Chriſt Ieſus, that
whether he come by thy procurement,
or without thy procurement, he was ſent
to thee by the Lord, to ſignifie ſo much
of his gracious pleaſure vnto thee. For
euery faithfull Miniſter is the ſeruant
of the Lord, ſent from the Lord himſelfe
to do his meſſage: yea, he is the Embaſ-
ſador of the Lord. For as *Paul* ſheweth,
(2. *Cor.* 7. 20.) we are Chriſts embaſſadors
for

for you. As therfore the embaſſador re-
preſenteth the perſon of the Lord his
king that ſent him: ſo doth the Miniſter
of the goſpel, being the Lords embaſſa-
dor, repreſent the perſon of the Lord, &
his Prince Chriſt Ieſus: and ſo ought to
be taken, euen as an earthly embaſſador
is, with the kings & princes of the world.
As therfore this is true, which *Paule* in
the forementioned place ſaith, namely,
that wee come as Embaſſadours in the
name of Chriſt, as though God himſelf
intreated you by vs, ſo we intreat you in
the name of Chriſt, to be reconciled vn-
to God: So likewiſe this is true, namely,
that wee come as Embaſſadours in the
name of Chriſt, as though God himſelf
ſpake vnto you: ſo we ſay vnto you in
the name of Chriſt, that your ſins are
forgiuen you. And therfore when thou
ſeeſt the embaſſador of the Lord, which
is his Miniſter, come vnto thee, and tell
thee, that thy ſinnes are forgiuen thee,
think with thy ſelfe, that the Lord as it
were by his owne mouth, hath now told
thee, that he hath pardoned thine offen-
ces. Yea the Miniſters of the Lord are the
Angels of the Lord, and ſo are called in
the third of *Malachy*, and the firſt verſe:

in

in the ſecond and third of the Reuelation, & in diuers other places. For there *Iohn Baptiſt*, the forerunner of Chriſt, is called the Angell of God: & again, the Miniſter of Epheſus, of Philadelphia, of Smyrna, of Pargama, is called the Angel of the Church of Epheſus, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Pargama, and ſo forth: to teach vs, that ſo we ſhould account of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, as of the Angels of God: and of their meſſage in the name of Chriſt, as if an Angell of glorie from heauen, ſhould haue told vs the ſame. Now if an Angel ſhould haue ſpoken to thee, as he did vnto *Manoah*, or vnto *Mary* the mother of Chriſt, at his conception, or vnto *Mary Magdalen* at his graue, or the Diſciples at his aſcention, or vnto *Iohn* in the Reuelation, or as vnto Chriſt in his agonie, thou wouldeſt I hope be ſatisfied and comforted therewith. And why then art thou not aſwel certified by the teſtimonie of the Miniſters, which are in like manner (as thou knoweſt) aſwel the Angels of God, as they: although indeed herein they differ: the one is an heauenly, the other an earthly: the one a more glorious, the other a more baſe Angell: yet they are both the Angels of

the

the Lord, both the one, and the other. And therfore thou oughtest in this message of God, to giue as much credite to the one, as to the other: as much vnto *Esay*, as vnto *Gabriel*: vnto *Paule*, as vnto *Michael*: if we may truly cal him an Angell: as much vnto *Moses*, and the Prophets, as to a man rising from the dead: as much vnto the earthly Angels, as vnto the Angels of heauē. For thou oughtest not to respect so much the messenger, as the maister: the seruant, as the Lord: the Embassador, as the Prince: the beautie, as the office of the messenger: except thou wilt be an accepter of persons. But if thou wilt needs respect the person, regard the person of God, which is common to the Ministers, with the Angels of glory. For aswel doth the Minister of God, as the Angels of God, bear and represent the person of God. Thou must not think the grace to be lesse gracious, sith the messēger is not so graced: nor the treasure to be of lesse value, because it is brought vnto thee, by or in an earthē vessel. For the word of the Lord, is the same in the mouth of a man & of a throne: in the earthly, & in the heauenly Angell. Notwithstanding it is more

for thy profit, to haue this message done vnto thee by a man, then by an Angel of glory. And that, both because such is the excellencie of the glorie of an Angel of light, that thou canst not indure the brightnes of his presence: and also, because thou neither canst be so familiar with him, as thou desirest, and shouldest be, to deliuer thine estate: nor yet canst at al times, when thou desirest, being on the earth, haue conference, and recourse vnto the Angels, being in heauen. The Lord therefore ascending vp on high, gaue among other gifts, this gift also of great value, vnto his Church, and vnto thy selfe, euen Pastors, & Doctors: that is, the Ministers of the Gospel of God: euen the earthly Angels, that should be continually & familiarly conuersant, & dwelling with earthly men: that might after a more familiar, & lesse fearful manner, declare vnto thē the secret counsels and hiddē misteries of God. Giue therefore credit vnto the Lords ministers, and glorie vnto God, that hath giuen in his great loue this blessing, and grace vnto thee, that thou shouldest continually haue abiding with thee, his Prophets, & his Angels, at whose mouth thou maiest

bee certified of the forgiueneſſe of thy ſinnes. Yea the Lord hath not giuen only this name vnto his miniſters, to confirme vnto thee the forgiueneſſe of thy ſinnes: but he hath further giuen vnto them power, & authoritie (vs miniſters of the word) to forgiue thee thine offences. For is thoſe keies of the kingdom of God, that the Lord gaue in *Peter*, vnto the Church, ſaying: Whoſe ſinnes yee remit, they are remitted: whoſe ſins yee retaine, they are retained: whatſoeuer ye bind in earth, ſhall be bound in heauen: whatſoeuer ye looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed on heauen. So that if the miniſters of the Goſpel of God, ſhal in the ſpirit of God, and power of Chriſt, forgiue thee thy ſins: if they ſhall ſay vnto thee, as *Nathan* did vnto *Dauid*, The Lord hath taken away thy ſinne: or as Chriſt vnto the ſick of the palſie, Sonne thy ſinnes are forgiuen thee: aſſure thy ſelfe, that inſomuch, as they haue looſed thee from thy ſinnes on earth, the Lord hath looſed thee from thy ſins in heauen: inſomuch, as they haue remitted and forgiuen thy ſins, they are remitted and forgiuen indeed. And take heed that thou do not as the moſt part of the

world doth, that depriue themselues of this comfort, and other the like, by the contempt, and base account of the ministers of the grace of God: beleeue the Lord, and his Prophets, saith *Iehosophat*, and thou shalt prosper. Despise not this gift which God hath giuen thee: for it is one of the principal gifts, mentioned by *Paul* in the fourth of the Ephesians, that Christ, when he tooke his farewell from the earth, gaue thereunto. I speak not these things to maintain the Popes auricular confession, or vsurped authoritie: but the lawfull power, giuen by God to his ministers: and therfore herein must meet together, (I meane in the forgiuenes of thy sinne by the minister) his discretion, thy contrition: his faithfulnes, thy faith: his wisedome, thy repentance: his calling, and thy calling: his calling must be lawfull, thy calling must be true: he must be faithful, thou must be penitent: he must be faithfull, thou must be faithful: he faithful in his office, thou in thy conuersion vnto the Lord. And then if these things be ioined together in thee, and in him, thou maiest bee assured, that the Lord in heauen hath forgiuen thy sinnes: as his mini-

sters

sters on the earth haue pardoned them: and that God hath loosed thee in heauen, that art loosed in the earth from thy sinnes. Thus from the testimonie, & witnes of the ministers of the kingdom of God, thou maist approue vnto thine own conscience, the forgiuenesse of thy sins. And this shall be the more strongly confirmed vnto thy soule, if thou shalt hereunto adde the testimonie of *Moses*, *Dauid*, *Salomon*, *Esay*, *Ieremy*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, and all the rest of the Prophets: the testimonie of Christ, *Peter*, *Paule*, *Iames*, *Iohn*, *Mathew*, *Marke*, *Luke*, and all the other Apostles, Euangelists, & holy men of God: who as it were out of the dead, being dead, speak vnto thee, auouching and confirming with one voice, one mouth, & one spirit, that thy sinnes are forgiuen, and all in offences clean blotted out: so that being compassed about with such a cloud of witnesses, and those such as are greater then all exception, wee ought to rest peaceably in the forgiuenes of our sins; which these so many and so faithfull witnesses, confirme vnto vs. These are the testimonies of men, which confirme vnto vs the forgiuenes of our sinnes.

The 17 Chapter.

Wherein is contained the third reason, taken from others, which is deriued from the Deuill, he testifying, and in his owne language confirming vnto vs the forgiuenesse of our sinnes.

He third reason, being taken from others, is taken from the testimonie of the deuil: who very sufficiently in his natural lãguage, if we rightly vnderstand the same, confirmeth vnto vs the forgiuenesse of our sinnes. And therefore for the better vnderstanding of his speech, and language, I will set thee down but two precepts & rules, as it were characters, by the which thou shalt easily vnderstand the darkest and hardest words in the deuils toong: and so shalt in short space become a good languager. The first rule shall shew thee when he speaketh: the second what he speaketh. Concerning the first, know for a certaintie, that whensoeuer thou receiuest any answer in thy consci-

conſcience, contrarie to that which is promiſed, or ſpoken in the word, contrary to the forgiuenes of thy ſin, to the receiuing of the ſpirit of adoption, to the increaſe of the graces of the holy Ghoſt, to the attaining of the inheritãce of the Saints in light, or the poſſeſſion of eternal life, or any ſuch like, that then the deuill tempteth thee: and ſpeaketh that word, and maketh that anſwere in thy ſoule. For this perſwaſion, and this anſwer, and this word, that the Lord wil not forgiue thy ſin, or giue thee his ſpirit, or eternal life, & ſaluation, commeth not frõ God. For the word of God ſaith the cleane contrarie. And we know that the Lord ſpeaketh not one thing in his word, and another thing in thy conſcience: one thing in his ſcriptures, & another thing in thy ſoule. Learne therfore this for a true, and an infallible precept, that whenſoeuer thou receiueſt an anſwere in thy ſelf, contrary to that which the Lord hath promiſed, that then the deuil ſpeaketh: & this thou muſt know to be true, although the perſuaſion come from thine own concupiſcence, & corrupt nature. For the Apoſtle calleth the prick of the fleſh, which is the motion,

and worke of originall sin, the messenger of Sathan (2.*Cor*.12.) This then is the first precept, by which thou maiest know when he speaketh.

The second rule, which must make thee vnderstand his words, must make thee first vnderstand his nature, which is to lie. For it is naturall for the deuill to lie. For he is naturally a lier: as appeareth both by the testimonie of Christ in the eight of *Iohn*, where he saith, the deuil was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. There is no truth in him, as oftētimes as he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, because he is a lier, and the father of a lie: and also, by the practise of the diuel himself, who both lied to our mother *Eue*, saying: that if shee did eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and of euill, that she shuld be like vnto the gods in the knowledge of good and euill, and that they should not die: and also was a lying spirit in the mouth of the Prophets of *Achab*, and so deceiued *Achab*, and his Prophets. Out of this knowledge of the deuils lying nature, thou shalt presently picke the meaning of his speeches, and words. For this rule is generally true,

that

that a lier speaketh clean contrarie vnto the truth: and the cleane contrarie of that which the deuil speaketh, is true. For in a lier, the cleane contrarie part must be taken for the truth. If therefore it euer hath been said vnto thee in thy soule, that thou shouldest not be saued, or that thy sinnes should not be pardoned, it hath beene as it were the message of the Lord vnto thy soule, to signifie vnto thee, thy election, and iustification: that thou shouldest be saued, and that thy sins were forgiuen. And looke how often this hath beene vrged vnto thy soule: so often hath it bene told vnto thee by the Lord, although by the message of the deuil, if thou hadst rightly vnderstood his language. And therefore, when thou, fearing the forgiuenes of thy sinnes, receiuest an answer in thy soule, that in vaine thou praiest, & that thou shalt not be pardoned, because thy sins are greater, as thou art persuaded then that they can be forgiuen so often cheare thy selfe, and thanke God for his louing mercie, and message, that hath told thee, and certified thy conscience, though by the message of Sathan, that thy sins are forgiuen thee. For alwaies

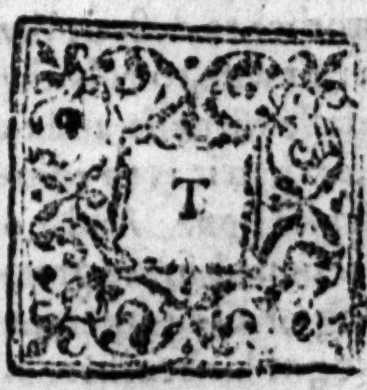
that which is cleane contrarie vnto the speech of a lier, is the truth. And therefore when Sathan saith, that they are not forgiuen: the cleane contrarie is true: and that is, that they are forgiuen. If we haue once learned this lesson wel, and shal put the same in practise in our soules, and consciences: we shall find as much comfort in this reason, (I know what I speake) as in any other reason whatsoeuer. For hereby the mouth of the deuill is stopped for euer, and he goeth away raging, not knowing what else to say. For if he did flatter vs with the forgiuenes of our sinnes, we would not receiue his testimonie: as *Paul* would not receiue the testimony of the southsaier, or Christ of the deuill, that confessed him to bee the son of the liuing God: but we would beleeue that to be true, because the Lord in his word said it. Again, if he did terrifie the conscience, & denie the forgiuenesse of our sinnes, we would beleeue it then most strongly, knowing that, in that a lier did denie it, the truth it selfe did affirm it. Thus euery way Sathan should be taken in a Dilemma: what argument soeuer he vsed, it would be turned vpon his own head:

and

and we ſhould be more wiſe, then the diuell was ſubtill: we ſhould haue better skill in the truth of Logicke, or reaſon, thē he in Sophiſtrie. If he did flatter vs, we would cheare vpon it: if he did feare vs, we would cheare alſo vpon it: if hee did perſuade the forgiuenes of our ſins, we ſhould be comforted: if he did diſſuade the forgiuenes of our ſinnes, wee ſhould be comforted alſo; and thus euery way we ſhould be ſtrengthned, cheared, and comforted.

The 18 Chapter.

Wherein is contained the laſt reaſon, taken from others, to prooue the forgiueneſse of ſinnes, which is drawne from the euill and daungerous counſill of Sathan.



THe laſt reaſon that we wil at this time conſider, is taken from that diueliſh and daungerous counſel, which Sathan giueth to the ſoule: which being troubled with the weight of ſinne, deſireth the forgiuenes therof. For it is the

fashion of Sathan, when thou hast sinned, to perswade thee to kill thy selfe, to hang thy selfe, to drown thy selfe, or at the least to cast off al cõfidence in hope, all vse of faith, and fully to dispaire of the mercy of God. Thẽ the which, what counsel can be more diuelish for Sathan to giue? or more dangerous for thee to follow? For dispaire is a sin of the first table, against the first commandement, and against the highest God. And therfore without question, it is the highest and greatest sin of all other (that great sin only, which is the sinne against the holy Ghost, excepted.) It is therefore a worser, and a greater siune to dispaire, then it is to worship Idols, to prophane the Sabaoth, to blaspheme the name of the Lord, to dishonor thy parents, to kil thy father, or thy brother, to deflour thy neighbors daughter, or wife, to rob thy neighbor, to beare false witnesse, and to forsweare thy selfe, or then it is to commit any other such like sinne. And no doubt, but that *Caine* sinned more greeuously, in dispairing of Gods mercie, then in the murdering of his brother *Abel*: and *Iudas* sinned not so much in betraying, as in distrusting Christ: his treason

ſon was not ſo greeuous as his diſpaire was. And therfore if according vnto the counſell of the deuill, thou ſhouldeſt ad diſpaire to thy other ſins: to thy whoredome, thy murder, thy blaſphemie, or thy robberie, thou ſhouldeſt draw ſinne after ſin, as it were with cartropes: adde drunkennes vnto thirſt, and ſo heaping vp of thy ſins, ſhouldeſt fulfill the meaſure of thine iniquitie, and purchaſe to thy ſelfe ſwift damnation. Beware therfore how thou follow this counſell of the deuill: who, as in all other ſpeeches he ſheweth himſelfe moſt vnfaithful: ſo in this his perſwaſion to diſpaire, moſt, I know not whether I ſhall call him dangerous, or doltiſh. For to perſuade to diſpaire after ſinne, to commit one ſin after another, the greater after the leſſer: is as much, as if an vnfaithfull phiſition ſhould preſcribe a man, after he hath taken cold, to take rats bane to driue it away: or after he had caught the murre, to drink cicuta, or the iuice of hemlock, to driue it away: which being farre colder then the former cold, would bring ſodaine and ſpeedie death: euen ſuch is the phiſicke, which that good phiſition of the ſoule, I meane the deuill giueth

thee,

thee. For when thou hast committed a great sinne against God, he would haue thee commit a greater: to driue away the fear of death, he prescribeth the spedie death of bodie and soule: to driue away the fear of hell fire, he would haue thee presently to run to hell, and to the deuill: euen as if a man that feared the water, should presently drown himself: or if a man feared the fire, he should presently goe burne himselfe: and so presently feele, that which hee feared, because hee would feare no longer. Then the which, what can be more foolish, or contrarie vnto reason? And yet so foolish thou art, as that thou art ready to execute his counsell, & to think it the best course for thee to follow: yea although thou canst hate other sins, and crie out against the lothsomnes therof: yet thou canst be ready to giue place to dispaire, which is the greatest sin, & to like that wel enogh: to nourish it, & to think that thou mihhtst do well to dispaire, and to cast off al hope of Gods mercie. Is it not a strange thing, that thou shouldst loth whoredome, theft, murder, & such like sins: yea, and if thou wert but mooued to them, be greeued therat, and yet like

of

of dispaire, a sinne farre greater then all the rest? yea, and that thou being but moued thereunto, shouldest giue place vnto it immediately? If therefore other sinnes be loathsome vnto thee, for the monstrousnes thereof: let dispair, which is the most monstrous sinne of al other, be most lothsome vnto thee. If thou feaest and fliest other sinnes: feare, & flie especially dispaire: which is a sinne far greater thē they all. And if thou hauing committed adultery, murder, or theft, or any such like, art by Satham tempted to dispaire, answere him, and say thus vnto him: Sathan, thou hast tempted me to commit this sin, thou hast tempted me to lie, to dissemble, to commit adultery, and such like: herein I haue yeelded to thee. Is it not enough, nay, is it not too much, that I haue thus far yeelded vnto thee, except I should now ad dispaire vnto the rest of my sins? If it were now in my hand to vndo that sinne which I haue committed, I would neuer surely by the power of the Lord, yeeld so much vnto thee as I haue done. And therefore farre be it from me, that I should again at thy procurement sin more greeuously, in falling to dispaire, of the grace and

mercie

mercie of God. Indeed if dispaire were any meanes to ease me of my sins, then perchance I might easily bee brought therinto: but sith it is a meanes to increase my sinnes, the burden and greefe of my soule, and the punishment of my sinne: sith it is a meanes to bring a certaine destruction, to a destruction that was but feared: certain, to an incertaine condemnation: death of body and soule to the death of faith: eternall, to temporall griefe: the paines of hell, to the pangs of conscience: hell fire, to thy fierie darts that sticke in my soule, I were bewitched, and worse then mad, if I would yeeld therunto. Thus thou must learne to stop Sathans mouth, and to stay thine owne faith, that it fall not into dispaire: of which I would haue thee to be most iealous, fearefull, and suspitious, knowing the daunger, and vnrecouerable euill thereof. If thou haue robbed God of his glory, in dishonoring of him: yet giue glorie vnto him in beleeuing of him: so shalt thou get as much glorie to his name, by beleeuing him: as thou diddest rob him of, by disobeying him: and purchase as great, nay, a far more excellent righteousnes by faith,

then

then thou diddest loose by sinne. For as *Paule* testifieth in the fourth to the Romans, to him that worketh not, but believeth in him, that iustifieth the wicked, his faith is imputed, and accounted to him for righteousnesse. And this righteousnesse of faith, is, as in another place the Apostle testifieth, the righteousnesse of God: which is far more excellent then the righteousnes of man. And this righteousnes perchance thou wouldest neuer haue sought for, if thou haddest not seene thy selfe naked, and destitute of al righteousnes in thy selfe: and couered so ouer with the shame of thine own nakednes, & filthines, that thou wert glad to runne vnto Christ, for his righteousnesse to couer thee: and buy of him eie salue, and white garments; that thy nakednes might not be seene. If therfore thou haue lost righteousnes, yet keepe faith: if thou haue lost the brest plate of righteousnesse, yet keepe the shield of faith, whereby thou maiest quench all the fiery darts of the deuill. If thou haue lost the armor of light, the cloth of thy soule, yet defend and keepe faith, which is the life of the soule: for the iust shall liue by faith. Say vnto thy soul with *Dauid*,

uid, Why art thou so vexed, oh my soule? and why art thou so disquieted within me? O my soule, trust in the Lord, and wait vpon him, for hee will heale thee. Thou seest my soule, what comfort the Lord hath left vnto thee in his word, & what liuely hope of pardon; he hath promised to forgiue thy sinnes, & hath sealed the same vnto thee by his word, his oth, his couenant, and by outward signs that mine eies haue seene: his mercie, his iustice, his sonne, his spirit, confirm the same vnto me: mine owne nature, my yong yeares in the Lord, and my sin it selfe: the testimonie of the ministers of the Lord, his seruants, Embassadors, and his Angels: God, and man: my selfe and others: Angels, and deuils: sin, and righteousnes: wine, and water: heauen, and earth: yea, all things affirme the same vnto thee my soule. Be bold therefore, and trust in the Lord, and he shall satisfie thee with good things, & make the increase of thy lips; and create peace within thee, and refresh thee with the waters of life, and make thee see his saiuing health. The Lord will not lie, that hath spoken it.

The

The 13 Chapter.

Wherein is largely and particularly declared, how Sathan effectually to worke an infidelitie in vs, and to make vs mistrust and misdoubt, nay dispaire of the forgiuenesse of our sinnes, fetcheth reasons out of euery particular reason that we doe, as wee to persuade, so he to dissuade the forgiuenesse of sinnes.

I Stand the longer in prouing of this one thing, because there is no one thing more hardly perswaded vnto the soule, then this is, and that by reason of the subtiltie of Sathan, who hath two generall means to make vs doubt hereof. The one is, by blinding the eies of our vnderstanding in such a sort, as that the light of the glorious Gospel of God cannot shine vnto vs. For he is that God of the world, that worketh effectually in the harts of many men: (yea of the best men sometimes) and thereby so depraueth and crooketh the right shape of their vnderstanding: as that the truth of the general promises of God, the force of

of reason, neither any thing else for the present time, can make them to concerne and beleeue the mercie of God,& the forgiuenes of their sinnes: because they are so couered ouer with darknes, and as it were a thicke cloud of mist. The other is,by vsing our owne corrupt nature,and infidelitie, which when we haue said,and done what we can do, wil stil stick in vs,& doubt hereof: and therfore will be readie to say, Well,for all this,I doubt whether the Lord will forgiue me,yea,or no,and be so good as his word.This our corruption Sathan vseth to corrupt vs withall:this our infidelity, to make vs infidels: and this our doubting, to make vs dispair of the forgiuenes of our sins. And that he may worke the same more effectually in vs,hee fetcheth reasons out of euery particular reason that we doe: as we to perswade, so he to dissuade the forgiuenes of our sinnes. And first,as touching the promises of God, which is our principall and first reason,he will labour to make vs distrust them: either by putting into vs a feare, or else an euill suspition of the Lord: as to think,nay to say in our harts, I but what if the Lord wil not be so good

as

as his word: who is ſtronger then the Lord, to compel him to it? or what law ſhall we haue againſt him? he is aboue all law; and therefore wee can neither ſtraine him nor conſtrain him to fulfill his promiſe: we cannot ſue him vpon an *aſſumpſit*. But be it that we could: he would find ſome one cauſe or other, he would find ſome demurre, or pick ſome quarrell againſt vs, and ſo would eaſily find a ſtaffe to beat a dogge, as the prouerb is. And herein, he ſetteth the Lord before vs, as it were a tyrant, who albeit he promiſe neuer ſo much, & performe neuer a deale, yet no mã is able, by reaſon of his force, to inforce him thereunto. And by this counterbuffe, he ſo buffeteth vs, that we are readie to ſtagger at the promiſes of God. But if this will not ſerue, he will run with vs to the ſecond reaſon, which is taken from the mercie of God. And he will graunt it, yea, and ſay it is true: God is mercifull indeed: hee gaue thee this & that bleſſing and benefit: thou wert ſick, and he healed thee: poore, & he inriched thee: baſe, and he honoured thee: miſerable, and he releeued thee: yea, he gaue thee of his ſpirit, the ioies of the holy Ghoſt,

the

the peace of conſcience: hee lifted the light of his countenance vpon thee, and reuealed vnto thee himſelfe, & his ſon Ieſus Chriſt. Theſe benefits (will he ſay) as thou knoweſt, ſhould haue mooued thee vnto repentance: but thou, according to the hardnes of thine own hart, that cannot repent, haſt ſinned againſt the Lord: and ſo heaped and hoorded vp wrath againſt the day of wrath, & the reuelation of the iuſt iudgemét of God. Indeed (will he ſay) if thou hadſt neuer receiued theſe graces from God, then had there ben left vnto thee ſome more hope: but now, after thou haſt receiued all theſe graces, to fall away, to quench the ſpirit, and greeue the holy Ghoſt, whereby thou wert ſealed vnto the day of redemption: is ſuch a ſinne as cannot be pardoned. And to this purpoſe he wil alledge the ſaying of the Apoſtle to the Hebrues, in the ſixt chapter, where hee ſaith, that it is impoſſible that they which haue been once inlightened, and haue taſted the heauenly gift, and been partakers of the holy Ghoſt, and haue taſted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they fal away, to be renued by repentance. And

by

by this meanes, and testimonie of the spirit of God, hee exceedingly terrifieth the constience: and will neuer suffer it to haue peace, vntill it shall please the Lord, to giue thereunto the right vse, & sense of this place: wherwith Sathan being repulsed, assaulteth them afresh, reasoning from the former mercy of God, to the forgiuenesse of their sinnes, after this manner: saying, thou haddest sinned before in the like maner, and in the same matter, and that not once or twise, but oftentimes, and the Lord pardoned thee: and now doest thou think that he will pardon thee againe? Why art thou not ashamed to come againe vnto the Lord, and craue pardon for this sinne? With what face (will he say) canst thou look vpon the Lord? Why me thinketh, that thou shouldest be ashamed to trouble the Lord so often, with thy prayers and requests. Indeed (will hee say) if it had been the first, or second time, then it had been more tollerable: but now, after the fift, or sixt time, or more, again to trouble the Lord with thy requests, it is neither for thy honestie, nor for the Lords ease, to be troubled so often, about one matter: and by this means he

maketh

maketh vs ſometime for ſhame to run from the Lord, and with *Adam*, being aſhamed to hide our ſelues in the woods, from the preſence of the Lord, and not to dare to craue pardon againe for our ſins, vntill we haue learned the nature of the Lords mercie, & with the prodigall ſonne, ſetting all ſhame aſide, to return to our father, and to confeſſe, that we haue ſinned againſt heauen, and againſt our God, & that we are not worthie to be called his ſons: and alſo, that ſhame and confuſion belongeth to vs: but mercie & forgiuenes vnto the Lord. If he ſee that this reaſon will not ſerue the turne: he will turne ouer the leafe with vs, and come to the third reaſon, which is taken from the iuſtice of God. And from thence hee will reaſon after this manner, ſaying: Thou knpweſt that the Lord is a iuſt God, a reuenger of al diſobedience offered vnto his maieſtie, and ſuch a one, as in the middeſt of his mercie, thinketh on iuſtice, and therefore he will not, no, nor cannot bee appeaſed, vntil he hath eaſed himſelf of his enemies, and auenged himſelfe of thy ſinnes. And the rather to perſuade this, he will tell vs, that it is a fearfull thing,

to

to fal into the hands of the liuing Lord: and that no adulterer, fornicator, couetous person, murderer, or such like, shal enter into the kingdome of God, or Iesus Christ, but shal haue his portion in that lake that burneth with fire & brimstone, which is the second death: as the spirit testifieth. And the more deeply to perswade this vnto the conscience: he will set before vs the son of Gods loue, Iesus Christ, and tell vs, that the Lord spared no not his owne sonne, who had but our sinnes vpon him: and how then shall he spare vs? yea, he will set before our eies the wrath of God poured vpon *Cain*, for his murder; vpon the Beniaminites, for their adulterie; vpon *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, for their rebellion; who went downe quicke into hell: and vpon the Sodomits, whom the Lord destroyed with fire and brimstone from heauen, for their sinne: yea, he will set before our eies the threatnings of God, who hath threatned death, and damnation, to all that shal transgresse his lawes: and those curses contained in the law of God, denounced against the wicked. And as they which are in securitie, shall hear frō Sathan, nothing els but mercy,

mercie: so they that are afflicted, shall find nothing from Sathan, but iustice, iustice: wrath, vengeance, and displeasure. And by this means, it is incredible what feare and trembling he breedeth in the hearts of the mourners: and by that means, how hardly they are broght that hear nothing, see nothing, feel nothing, but Gods iustice, to imbrace, and beleeue his mercie. And by this reason, he cõtinually terrifieth the conscience, vntill it know, that both the wrath of God was appeased in Christ Iesus, who in our person, & for our sine, was punished, and so the iustice of God was executed, in, and vpon him: and also, that as the law with the threatenings thereof, appertaineth vnto the obstinate: so the promises, with the grace of God, & not the law, appertaineth vnto them that are truly humbled, and in Iesus Christ. For they that are in Christ, saith the Apostle, are not vnder the law, but vnder grace. Now if Sathan see, that none of these reasons from the Father, will serue his turne, he will run with vs vnto Christ, and will tell vs, that there was neuer any such man as Christ was: or if there were, that he was but a deceiuer,

uer, a iugler, a false Christ, sent into the world to seduce the wicked, and them that are appointed to reprobation: as shall more at large appeare in another place. But if this wil not serue the turn: he will perswade vs that Christ came to be a Iudge, to condemne the world, and to leaue them without excuse: as he did *Martine Luther*: and so will he set him frowning vpon vs, as a Iudge, that is displeased with vs. Or if this wil not serue: hee will tell vs, that Christ came not to die for vs, but for *Peter*, *Paule*, *Dauid*, and such like: but as for vs, hee knew vs not, we were not then: and therfore he could not then die for vs. But yet, if this will not suffice, hee will euen chide with the soule, and ask him whether he will make Christ a bawd for his sinnes. And this especially he vrgeth, while we seeing our own nakednes, do seeke and sue for the righteousnes of Christ to put vpon vs, as a white garment to couer vs: so as our nakednesse, & the filthinesse of our sins be not seene. For then hee will stil vrge this one thing, saying: Oh thou wouldest haue Christ to bee a couer, a cloake, yea, a bawd for thy sin: but all in vaine, will he say. And for the proofe

hereof, he wil straight alledge the saying of the Lord in the 70 psalme, which is to be applied to the obstinate, and such as hate discipline, and cast the words of God behind their back, as there plainely appeareth: where he saith. As soone as thou seest a theefe, thou consentest vnto him, and thy portion is with the adulterers. Thou openest thy mouth to euill, and with thy toong thou framest deceit. Thou sitting, speakest against thy brother, & slandereſt thy mothers son. While thou didst these things, because I made my selfe as it were deafe: thou thinkest me to be such a one as thy selfe is: but I wil reproue thee, and set before thine eies thy sins in order as they were done. And herby he exceedingly trobleth the conscience, and filleth it with feare, and dispaire, vntil such time as we feele our selues verely and indeed, to be couered ouer with the righteousnes of the son of God, Iesus Christ, who is made vnto vs of God the Father, wisdome, holines, righteousnes, and redemption. If this reason will not preuaile against vs, he wil reason as wel as we, from the holy Ghost: and will tell vs, that the feare that is bredde in our conscience for our

sinnes,

finnes, is not the worke of the ſpirit of God, to frame vs vnto repentance, and to breed in vs a godly ſorow, to amendment of life: but rather, that it is a ſeruile fear, ſuch as *Iames* ſaith, is in the deuils; who fear, & tremble: yea, a doubting ſuch as is in the infidels: of whom the ſame *Iames* ſpeaketh, ſaying; Let not the mã that doubteth, think he ſhal receiue any thing: yea, that it is a fore-taſt of the diſpleaſure of God, and of the fearfull eſtate of the reprobat. And as touching the peace of cõſcience, albeit we haue aboundantly felt the ſame, yet he wil perſuade vs, that it was not the peace of conſcience, but rather an illuſion of the deuil, ſent vnto him by the Lord to deceiue him, and ſo to deſtroy him by a falſe flattering of himſelfe. And for the better perſwaſion hereof, he will tell vs, that the diuell can change himſelfe into the image of an Angell of light, and by that means ſo deceiue vs, as that we cannot, as he will ſay, diſcerne the work of the ſpirit, from the illuſion of the deuill. To whom if we ſhal auſwer, that albeit he can chaunge himſelfe into the image of an Angel of light: yet not into the like working of the ſpirit of God:

for that he cannot create, either ioy, or peace of conſcience, or the ſpirit of adoption in vs. For theſe are proper works of the ſpirit: yea, euen in them that haue a temporarie faith, and fall away again vnto perdition, his mouth is ſtopped, & he will leaue this reaſon, and come vnto our naturall inclination to ſin, & from thence he will reaſon after this maner, ſaying: Thou knoweſt that the Lord wil forgiue the ſinnes only of the penitent and them that doe repent: that leaue their ſinnes, and neuer commit them againe: for that (will hee ſay) is true repepentance. But thou ceaſeſt not to ſin: for as thou wert conceiued in ſinne, ſo thou continueſt in ſin: and then continuing in thy ſin, how doeſt thou repent thee of thy ſinne? and then, thou not repenting thee of thy ſinne, how canſt thou looke that thy ſinne ſhould be pardoned? And thus by a falſe perſuaſion, that repentance conſiſteth in a cleane aboliſhing of ſinne, and not in the amendment of life, as the truth is that it doth: hee deceiueth the conſcience, and perſwadeth it, that therefore their ſinnes are not pardoned, becauſe they are not for euer abandoned

ned. And vnto this persuasion, he addeth diuers other reasons taken from sinne itselfe: and first, from the greatnes therof, which hee amplifieth and increaseth very artificially, shewing himselfe herein a Grammarian, that can frame of the positiue, which is the loweſt, the superlatiue, which is the higheſt degree. a Rhethoritian, that hath a notable facilitie & grace in *Hyperbole*: a Logitian, that can reason from the lesser, to the greater: as also, if occasion serued, frõ the greater, to the lesser: an Arithmetitian, that hath skill in multiplying: a Musitian, that can make the loweſt cord, accord, and sound equally with the higheſt: a Geometritian, who, as he can describe the whole world, in a little paper: so infect much paper with the description of a little countrie: and to speake in a word, a right deuill, that make a mountaine of a moulehill. For these are the arts, or rather deceits of Sathan: whereby he can notably increase the greatnes of our sin. If it be but in consent, he will perswade vs, that it is all one, as if it were done. And to this purpose, he will alledge the saying of Christ, in the fift of *Mathew*, where he saith, that he that looketh

keth on a woman to luſt after her in his hart, hath committed adultery with her alreadie. If it be committed after grace receiued, & of knowledge: he will perſuade vs that it is the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt, which ſhall neuer bee pardoned in this world, nor in the world to come. If it were committed before our calling, & groſſe alſo, he will tel vs that our ſins are greater, then that they can be pardoned: as he perſuaded *Cain* that his were. And for the better perſwaſion hereof, he addeth the teſtimonie of the law, which cõfirmeth, as he pretendeth, that which he himſelfe affirmeth. As for example: if a man haue with *Salomon* committed idolatry, or with *Dauid* adulterie, or with *Peter* apoſtacie: here the law ſaith, that adulterers, idolaters, fornicators, & ſuch like, the Lord wil iudge: Sathan ſaith ſo: the conſcience knoweth ſo. The law ſaith, no idolater, nor fornicator, nor vnclean perſon, ſhall enter into the kingdome of God, or Chriſt: the deuil ſaith ſo: the conſcience ſaith ſo. The law ſaith, the Lord hateth ſuch: the deuil ſaith, the Lord hateth ſuch: & the conſcience feareth, that the Lord hateth ſuch: & it knoweth it ſelfe to be ſuch. So

that

that Sathan affirming, the law confirming, the conscience consenting: sin is made out of measure sinful, by the law, and the art of Sathan: and so it seemeth to be so great, & immeasurable, as that it exceedeth the greatnes of the mercie of God, & the value of the bloud of Iesus Christ. And yet further, the more to increase the greatnes of our sin: he willeth vs to weigh the weight therof, which we feel sensibly to lie very heauy on our souls, after we haue cõmitted the same. And therefore is it, that *Dauid* counteth him happie, that is lighted of his sin: & Christ willeth thẽ that are heauie laden to come vnto him, & he wil ease them. Now Sathan by the heauyweight of our sin, perswadeth the hainous work in sinning: and concludeth, that because our sin is intollerable, it is immeasurable: & therefore, that as it presseth vs vnto the earth, so it will into hell: as it casteth vs vpon our face, so it will cast vs from the face & presence of the Lord. Vnto this weight of sin, he addeth the monstrousnes that is in the same. For as righteousnes is a most glorious vertue: so is sin a most vglie, deformed, and monstrous thing; and so as it is, Sathan maketh it

appeare to the ſoule. For howſoeuer before when Sathan inticeth vs to ſin, we are blinded, that we cannot behold the monſtrouſnes thereof, becauſe he couereth it ouer with a pleaſant & delightful cloke: yet after that the fact is committed, he openeth our eies: ſo that the filthines and monſtrouſnes thereof appeareth at large vnto the ſoule. Out of which, as Sathan reaſoneth, that therefore, ſith ſin is a monſter, it is monſtrous: ſith it is monſtrous in ſhape, it is monſtrous in ſhew, & meaſure. So the ſoule eaſily is reſolued thereof: and that ſo much the rather, becauſe it is an eie witneſſe of that which Sathan ſaith. And yet the more to increaſe the horror & greatnes of our ſins: he addeth the multitude therof: which are more in number, than either the haires of our head, or the ſtarres of the skie, or the ſands of the ſea ſhore, which are innumerable: & that therefore, albeit our ſins were not mightie, as we would beleeue: yet in ſo much as they are ſo many, he will eaſily infer, that they are exceeding great. For that which wanted in the greatneſſe, is recompenced in the multitude: & that which wanted in the weight, is repaied

with

with the number: wherby our ſins haue ben ſo exceedingly multiplied: as that what with the greatnes, and what with the multitude, our meaſure of iniquitie is fulfilled, our viall full, and the treaſuric and hoord of our ſins, filled to the top: & that therefore the wrath of God muſt needs immediately ſmoke againſt vs. And thus, partly by the law, partly by the weight, partly by the monſtrouſnes, and partly by the multitude of our ſins: he by this his art ſo increaſeth our ſins, that he decreaſeth our faith: & maketh them to be ſo great, that our faith is little, or none at all: he ſo filleth our hord with ſins, that he emptieth the heart of hope: and maketh vs readie to thinke indeed with *Cain*, that our ſins are greater, thē that they can be forgiuē. Thus, as Sathan reaſoneth from ſin in the firſt place, from the greatnes thereof, to diſſwade the forgiuenes thereof: ſo in the ſecond place he reaſoneth from the preſence therof, which by the force & work of Sathan, euen after the forgiueneſſe therof, and the peace of conſcience, and the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt giuen vnto the ſoule, is put in the memorie, and repreſented vnto the ſoule: and that in

such a liuely shape, idea, and forme, as they are, and were in their own nature. And this made *David* complaine in his 51 psalm, that his sins were continually before his eies: yea, after that the Prophet *Nathan* hath told him, that his sins were taken away, & that he should not die therefore. And this made the same Prophet count him happie, whose sins were couered (*Psal.* 32.) namely, that they were no longer present before the eie of his conscience, as well as the eies of the Lord. And this is that, that maketh the godly, at the hour of their death, or the day of their triall, to doubt, to fear, and to tremble, because they see their sins stil before their face, & fresh in their conscience: which of it self were enough to make them doubt of the forgiuenes of their sins. How much more? when Sathan shal reason frō thence, & perswade them, that therefore their sinnes are not done away: sith they are still as fresh in their cōscience, as if they were but now done: that therefore they are not blotted out, sith they are imprinted in their consciences: that they are not defaced, sith they are before their face: and that they are not taken out of their soul, sith

they

they are ſtill therin. And wheras, before they were couered, hee will tell vs, that that was but with forgetfulnes, or with ſecuritie, or hardnes of hart, or pleaſure, or ſome other fancies, that crept into the ſoule, in ſtead therof. But now, when theſe things were gone, he might ſee, as Sathan will ſay, that the guiltines of his ſin, ſtill guilded ouer his conſcience: and the deformitie, and filthines therof, was but ſlubbered ouer with vntempered morter: and not waſhed cleane out, by the bloud of Ieſus Chriſt, and the ſpirit of our God. And by this means, how he troubleth, feareth, caſteth downe the ſoule, and beateth downe faith, no man knoweth, but he that feeleth: & he that feeleth it, knoweth the ſtrength of Sathan, and of this reaſon againſt the forgiuenes of our ſin. And yet further, becauſe he would leaue no ſtone, as the Prouerbe is, vnremoued: he reaſoneth from the name, as before he did frō the nature of ſin. And he telleth vs, that our ſins are our debts, which we muſt make paiment of: for the Lord will not, as Sathan will tel vs, be any looſer by vs. And here, when he hath told vs, that wee are not able to ſatisfie the debt: he wil tel vs

withall,

withal, that he is the Lords attorney to arrest vs, his man of law to wage the law against vs, his sayler to take vs into hel, which is his prison. And herein indeed he wil begin to execute his office, to lay the law to vs, to sue vs, to implead vs, & wil bring the matter to an execution, or a *Nisi prius*. For if we haue not before a quittance to shew, sealed, and written with his owne finger, against this debt: he will make vs glad, to keepe our houses, yea, our beds, or els to run away (if we can) to hide vs: or els to flie to some man to succour vs: or els to some priuiledged place: euen to Christ, the sanctuarie & place of refuge, for them that flie, & dare not shew their faces, for the debt of sin, that they owe to their Lord. To whom, if they shall flie, Sathan will labour to outrun them, & will be there at the leastwise in shew, before them: & then, when they would step vnto Christ, Sathan would step vp between them, & Christ: and taking vpon him the frowning person of Christ, as he is man: he will make the conscience beleeue, that it is Christ, that frowneth vpon him: & so if it be possible, he wil make them to flie from Christ: and driue them to *Dauid* or

Salomon.

Salomon, or *Manasses*, by their examples to comfort themselues: where also he will be sure to meet with them: & tell thē, that as for *Dauid*, *Salomon*, *Manasses*, and such like, they were the elect vessels of God: but as for thēselues, they were no such, they were vessels of wrath, & appointed by the Lord vnto reprobation: and therfore, although no sin could seperate *Dauid* from the Lord, yet some one, should foreuer cast thē off from the loue of the Lord: as one sin did the deuils: as one offence did *Saule*: & as one murder did *Caine*: and that therefore it is in vaine to trust by their examples to be pardoned. Now, if being dashed by this persuasion, we shall leaue *Dauid*, *Salomon*, and the rest, & determine to haue recourse vnto the Ministers of the Gospel, either he wil labor to hinder vs, that we shall not manifest our estate to thē: & that, either for fear, or for shame: that thus our greefe being not imparted, might not be impaired: & being not parted with others, might not depart from our selues: but grow, as confirmed diseases, to become incurable: or els if he cānot by the prouidēce of God hinder this purpose and practise in vs: hee will

labour,

labour, either on the one side, to driue vs, as he hath driué many to the popish reconcilers: to the priests of *Baal*: and to *Balam* for counsell: and so to seeke ease from the deuill, & from Antichrist: from crosses, from crucifixes, from holy water, from *Campions* bones, frō reliques of Saints, from our owne workes, from the popes absolution, or from his pardon, & not from Christ: and so bring vs in a worse case, then we were before: or else on the other side he will breed in vs such a dislike of the ministers of the gospel, for their contempt, for their pouertie, for their infirmities, or for some other such like cause, that he will make vs thereby out of conceit with them. And therwithall persuade vs, that they are the false, and not the true prophets of the Lord. And that, whereas they comfort them, they do but flatter them. And therwithall, he will not stick to say to the conscience: I, go to, flatter thy selfe: but thou shalt find in the end my words to be true: and that euen as I told thee also: when thou shalt see, that thou criedst peace, peace, when suddaine destruction was at hand. And as for absolution of the minister: hee

will

wil either demaund what authoritie he hath to forgiue sinnes; or els hee will crie out, that that is flat poperie, and so where as hee hindereth some from the truth, by a feare of poperie: he draweth some other from the truth, vnto poperie: knowing, that his scope is to hinder vs from the true comfort of the Lord. And this, so that it be done, hee careth not whether it be by a face of poperie: or by force, vnto poperie; so that we be damned, whether it be by thy delusion or by dispair, he is satisfied: but dispaire in this case, is the most vsuall, and also the most perillous estate, to the which, that he might fully draw vs: he in our praiers, in our sighes, and grones vnto the Lord, will take vpon him the person of the Lord, and will euen answer within, as if it were the spirit of God that spake vnto vs, and tell vs, that in vain we pray, in vaine we seeke, in vaine we call vpon the Lord, for he will neuer heare vs, nor forgiue vs, nor neuer receiue vs againe vnto fauour. And this he will so constantly, and with such a feare, auouch vnto the soule: as that, if we doe not relie vpon the Lord in his word, wee shall be most greeuously afflicted, and cast

downe

downe: which if Sathan once perceiue, and see that we giue ground vnto him: hee will follow vs at the heeles, and not giue vs an inch respite: but will still lie vpon vs, so as we shal scarse find a breathing time. And so giuing vs no rest, he will perswade vs to dispaire, to destroy our selues, and that it were better for vs to be out of our liues, thē to liue in such garboils, such feares, such fightings, and such trouble, and therupon hee will not stick to persuade vs to destroy our selues, to kill our selues, to break our necks, to hang our selues, to drown our selues, or to cut our owne throats: as *Iudas*, *Achitophel*, and many other with vs, most lamentably haue done, being destitute of comfort, & deceiued by these and such like perswasions of the deuill. Whom, that wee might the better resist, I haue considered these reasons out of the word and committed them to writing: that a Christian, that is to war and fight with Sathan, might not bee vnfurnished nor vnprouided of spiritual armor: especially of the word of the spirit, which is the word of God: a most forcible weapon to repulse & driue back the deuil withall: with the which, if we assault him, as

wise

wise warriors, we shal be more then conquerors, by him that hath loued vs, and giuen himselfe for vs: and these comforts vnto vs in his sacred word. Which that wee may rightly profite by; let vs read them with deliberation, & meditation. And withall let vs learn this one point against Sathan: that is, out of the same reason that hee gathereth matter of feare, and dispaire, out of the same, let vs seeke and sucke comfort. If he taketh his reason from the mercie of God, or from his iustice: if from his promises, or from Christ: if from our nature, and sin it selfe: if from the answers in our soule, or from dispaire it selfe: out of the very same let vs reason against him. And we shall be better able to answere, then he to replie: or at the least better able to replie, then he to answere. If he shal say, that we can doe nothing but sinne: let vs answer, it is natural. If he shal say, that our sinnes are monstrous: let vs say, that they are our debts. If he shall say, that God is iust: let vs answer, that therefore he must forgiue our offences. If he shall tell vs, that it was answered vs within, that in vaine we praied: let vs answere, that it was a lier, that so answered vs: &

so

so foorth in the rest. And thus by this meanes wee shall cut the deuils throat with his owne sword: and (as a bee) suck hony out of that flower, out of the which he (as the spider) sucketh poyson.

FINIS.

The Contents of the Chapters contained in this Booke.

Chap. Fol.

1 *Wherein it is declared, that there is liuely hope of comfort left vnto all them that mourne vnder the burden of their sinnes.* Fol. 1

2 *In the first part whereof are set downe the expresse promises of God, concerning the free forgiuenes of sins: & in the latter is declared: first, that the same promises of mercie are deliuered vnto vs in the word of God: then that they are bound by his oath: thirdly, that they are also bound by his indenture of couenants: & lastly, that they are confirmed by two visible signs & tokens in stead of wonders: to wit, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.* Fol. 7

3 *Wherein the forgiuenes of sins is proued, by the consideration of Gods mercy, which*

is

is one part of his essence, substance, and nature. Fol. 55

4 Wherein the forgiuenes of sins is proued by the consideration of Gods iustice (which is another nature essentiall vnto him) by three especiall waies. First, by reason that the Lord hath promised to forgiue our sins, in regard whereof it standeth with his iustice to performe the same. Secondly, for that he hath alreadie punished Iesus Christ for our offences, and therefore cannot in iustice punish them in vs also. And lastly, because he hath alreadie punished our persons in Christ, and so cannot iustly punish vs againe. Fol. 69

5 Wherein the forgiuenes of sins is proued, by a reason taken frõ the second person in the Trinitie, to wit, the word Incarnate, euen Iesus Christ, being considered, as he is the vine, and the braunches. Fol. 85

6 Wherein the forgiuenes of sins is proued, by considering Iesus Christ, as hee is our aduocate, and intercessour, and the mediator of the new Testament. Fol. 89

7 Wherein the forginenes of sins is proued, by considering Iesus Christ, as he is our king and spirituall prince, Fol 98

8 Wherein the forgiuenes of sins is proued by considering Christ, as hee is our Physiti-

on,

on, that with his owne bloud cureth and healeth all our infirmities, both corporall and spirituall. Fol.107

9 Wherin the forgiuenes of sins is proued, by considering Christ as he is our redeemer, who hath with his own bodie purchased of his Father the pardon for our sinnes, and with his own bloud ransomed vs, and paid the price of the redemption of our sinnes. Fol. 114

10 Wherin are touched two reasons taken fro the spirit of God (the holie Ghost, being the third person in the Trinitie.) The first as the spirit is considered, to worke repentance & contrition in vs, and so washeth vs from our sinne. The other, as the spirit breedeth and worketh peace in our conscience, wherewith the forgiuenesse of our sinnes is sealed. Fol.118

11 Wherin is contained the first argument, or reason, which to proue the forgiuenesse of sinnes, is taken from the creature (the reasons being before taken from the creator) and that from man, considered in himselfe, with his estate being naturally inclined to sinne. Fol.120

12 Wherin is contained the second reason, taken from man, to proue the forgiuenes of sins, by the consideration of our infancie,

we

wee neuer being but new borne babes, so long as we liue. Fol.125

13 *Wherin is contained the first reason, taken from sinne it selfe, which is drawne from the name of sinne, being called our debt.* Fol.128

Wherin is contained the second reason, takē from sinne it selfe, to proue forgiuenesse of sins: which ariseth from the effect of sin, serving to set forth the abundance of the grace of God, and to magnifie his power. Fol.131

15 *Wherin is contained the first reason, takē from man, as he is considered in others; which is drawne from the examples of other men, by which the eternitie of the forgiuenesse of sinnes, is further assured vnto vs.* Fol.134

16 *Wherin is contained the second reason, taken from man, being considered in others: which is drawne from the testimonie of others: as of the Ministers of the word of God, of the Prophets, of Christ himselfe, of the Apostles, and all other holy men of God, who as faithfull witnesses announce confirm the forginenes of sins.* Fol.139

17 *Wherin is contained the third reason, taken from others, which is deriued from the Deuill, he testifying, and in his owne language*

language confirming unto vs the forgiuenesse of our sinnes. Fol.150

18 Wherein is contained the last reason, taken from others, to proone the forgiuenesse of sinnes, which is drawne from the euill and dangerous counsell of Sathan. Fol.155

19 Wherein is largely and particularly declared, how Sathan effectually to worke an infidelitie in vs, and to make vs mistrust and misdoubt, nay dispaire of the forgiuenesse of our sinnes, fetcheth reasons out of euery particular reason that we doe, as wee to persuade, so he to dissuade the forgiuenesse of sinnes. Fol.163

FINIS.